Jan. 27, 1992

THE NEW YORKER

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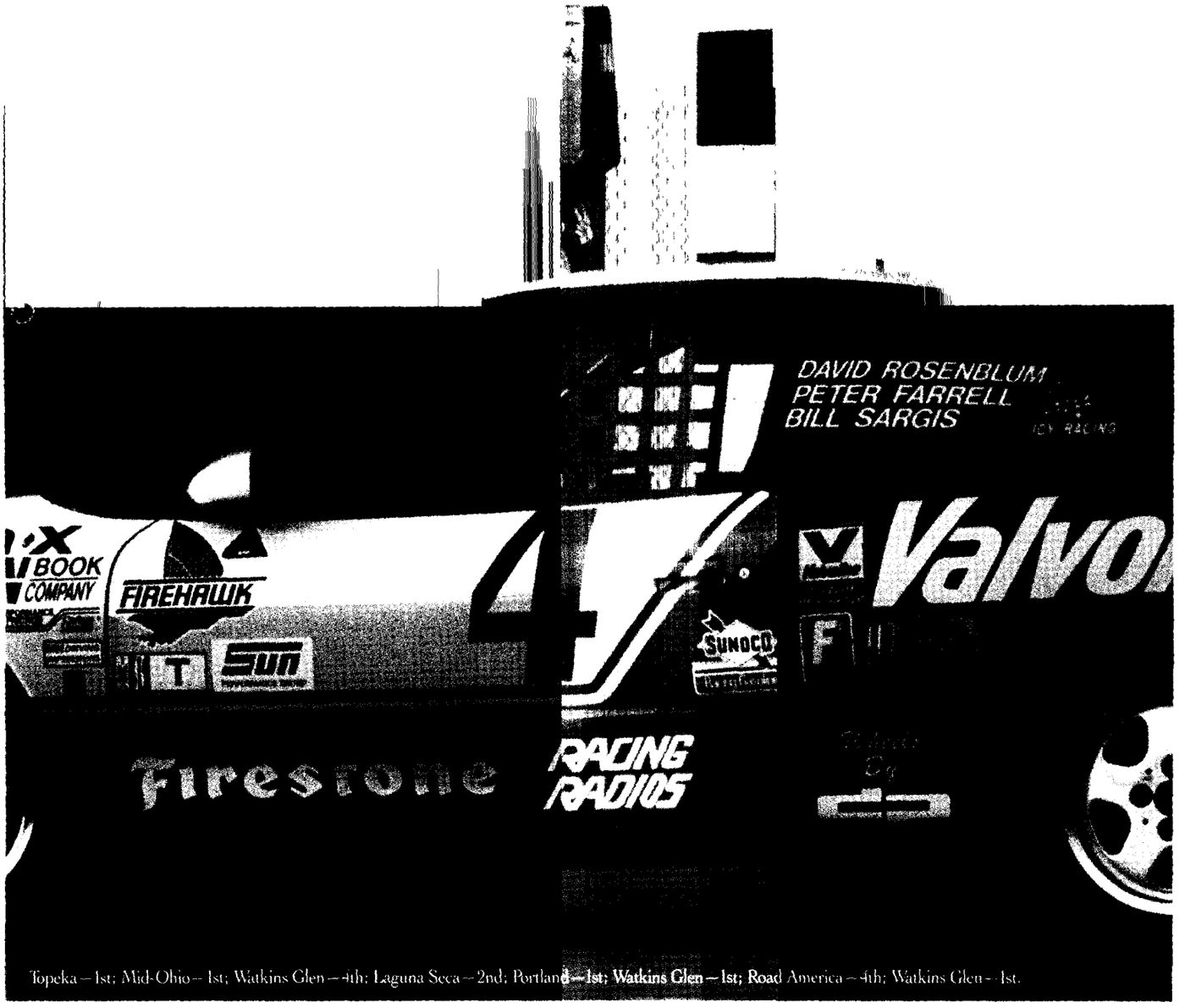

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THE NEW YORKER

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

At least twice a week, we receive the phone call. Sometimes, it's from a friend; more often, it's from a friend of a friend. The caller has just arrived in town, for a short stay, and wants to know if we can help him or her secure tickets to that night's performance of "The Phantom of the Opera." Unless the caller is willing to submit to the extortionate demands of a ticket broker, our advice is always the same: show up at the Majestic Theatre (245 West 44th Street) around 4:30 P.M. At that hour, a line begins forming to buy returns for that evening's performance. If the person cannot show up until nearer curtain time, we still counsel this strategy. A high proportion of queuers (more during the week than on the weekend) are rewarded for their patience.

From time to time, we hang out with one of our "Phantom" hopefuls. We like seeing whether our advice has remained sound, and we like listening to theatregoers' chatter. We're pleased to report that, one night last week when we were keeping a cousin company until show time, only a few people were left out in the cold at eight o'clock. Unfortunately, we must also report that the small talk was rather monotonous. What was on people's minds? The price of tickets. One woman said she'd heard that the hundred-dollar seats for "Miss Saigon" (another show, by the way, that has a returns line) were being phased out. Wasn't that good news? Yes, we said, but did she know that the new top ticket for "Miss Saigon"—and for "Phantom"—would be sixty-five dollars as of March 9? Another woman worried that a good seat to the upcoming star revival of "A Streetcar Named Desire" would be equally expensive. No, we said: that ticket would cost only fifty dollars, and if the last Broadway revival of a Tennessee Williams play ("Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," with Kathleen Turner) was any indication, "Streetcar" would be available at the half-price TKTS booth some of the time anyway. The second woman's husband asked if "the Glenn Close play" (Mike Nichols' upcoming production of Ariel Dorfman's "Death and the Maiden") would be discounted, too. We said we didn't know. We wanted to add that in London the Dorfman had used well-known actors yet had cost only about ten dollars for some prime seats, but the line was starting to move. We said goodbye to our cousin and went home to watch television.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Boesman and Lena—Athol Fugard has directed this revival of his 1969 play. Keith David, Tsepo Mokone, and Lynne Thigpen make up the cast. Previews through Jan. 28. Opens Jan. 29 at 8. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

The Comedy of Errors—A production of Shakespeare's comedy, presented by Theatre for a New Audience. Previews through Jan. 24. Opens Jan. 25 at 8. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

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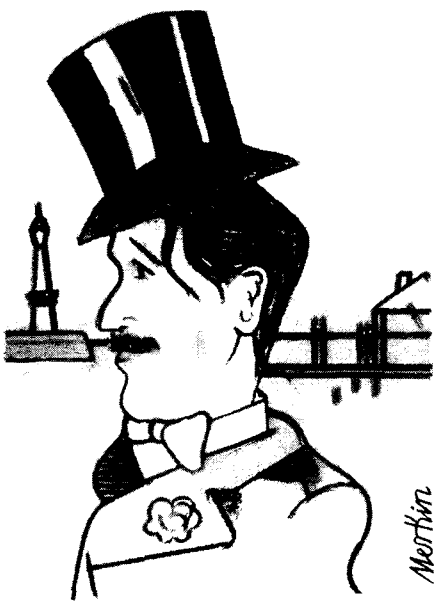

Georges Feydeau, author of "A Little Hotel on the Side"

Crazy He Calls Me—Barry Miller portrays an attorney and Polly Draper an idealistic social worker in a play by Abraham Tetenbaum, which is set in the late thirties. Previews through Jan. 26. Opens Jan. 27 at 6:45. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Haarlem Nocturne—André De Shields reprises his 1984 cabaret show, which started out at La Mama and later moved to Broadway. Opens Jan. 23 at 10 P.M., and runs through Feb. 8. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

The Home Show Pieces—Four short plays written and directed by, and featuring (in three of the four works), David Greenspan. Previews through Jan. 27. Opens Jan. 28 at 8. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Innocent Eréndira and Her Heartless Grandmother—An adaptation of a novella by Gabriel García Márquez; directed by Jorge Ali Triana. Performed in Spanish; simultaneous English-translation sets are available. In previews. (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850.)

Julie Halston's Lifetime of Comedy—A one-woman show. In previews. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

A Little Hotel on the Side—The National Actors Theatre's production of a 1894 farce written by Georges Feydeau in collaboration with Maurice Desvallières. The translation is by John Mortimer. The cast includes Rob Lowe, George N. Martin, Maryann Plunkett, Tony Randall, and Lynn Redgrave. Directed by Tom Moore. This play ran on Broadway in 1957 under the title "Hotel Paradiso." In previews. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Most Happy Fella—A revival of Frank Loesser's 1956 musical comedy, starring Spiro Malas and Sophie Hayden. Directed by Gerald Gutierrez, the production orginated at the Goodspeed Opera House, in East Haddam, Connecticut. Previews begin Jan. 24. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Visit—Jane Alexander and Harris Yulin have the leads in the Roundabout's revival of a play by Friedrich Dürrenmatt (as adapted by Maurice Valency). Edwin Sherin directed. Previews Jan. 21-22. Opens Jan. 23 at 8. (Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

OPENED RECENTLY

As You Like It—Joanne Camp is Rosalind in this production of Shakespeare's play, which was directed by Anthony Cornish. (Pearl, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708. Closes Jan. 25.)

Beau Jest—A comedy by James Sherman. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

Bella, Belle of Byelorussia—A comedy by Jeffrey Essmann, with songs by Michael John LaChiusa. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523. Closes Feb. 2.)

Bluebeard—The Ridiculous Theatrical Company revives Charles Ludlam's 1970 play. (Charles Ludlam, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271. Closes Feb. 2.)

Breaking Legs—The Mafia meets Off Broadway. Philip Bosco and Vincent Gardenia play a pair of mobsters who back a new play in order to win a young dramatist for Gardenia's daughter. Tom Dulack wrote the comedy; John Tillinger directed it. With Larry Storch, Karen Valentine, Ronald Maccone, and Nick Wyman. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/3/91.) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Catskills on Broadway—A festival of ethnicity and all but unbroken laughter. Freddie Roman and Mal Z. Lawrence are the Jewish comedians; Dick Capri handles the Italians. The jokes explode around us, and there isn't a dud in the lot. Marilyn Michaels, the fourth member of the company, does imitations of imitations. (12/23/91) (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Cinderella—The Riverside Shakespeare Company presents an English pantomime version of the fairy tale. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Dancing at Lughnasa—How you respond to Brian Friel's wistful autobiographical play depends a good deal on your personality and preoccupations. Either you will find it lovely and lyrical or it will strike you as the memory play from Hell. (11/4/91) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Down the Flats—A play by Tony Kavanagh, which is set in Dublin. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

From the Mississippi Delta—In eleven scenes, Endesha Ida Mae Holland dramatizes her own rise (and journey) from the Delta (where she had been a teen-age prostitute) to the University of Minnesota and triumph in academia. The leading character, though, is her mother, a midwife called Aint Baby, who is very well portrayed by Cheryl Lynn Bruce. The role of the author is split between Ms. Bruce, Sybil Walker, and Jacqueline Williams, and the result is a lively and merry evening. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

Invention for Fathers and Sons—A play by Alan Brody. Presented by the American Jewish Theatre. (Susan Bloch, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

I Won't Dance: Steve Ross Sings Fred Astaire—Mr. Ross in an "all-singing, all-playing, non-dancing" tribute. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. For information about tickets, call 688-7253.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—Presenting two plays in rotating repertory: George Bernard Shaw's **Geneva** and Bertolt Brecht's **Galileo**. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Lips Together, Teeth Apart—Two couples share a beach house on Fire Island over the Fourth of July weekend, in Terrence McNally's very funny play about a number of serious matters. With Hillary Bailey Smith, Jonathan Hadary, Roxanne Hart, and Anthony Heald; directed by John Tillinger. (7/8/91) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

Mad Forest—This Caryl Churchill play, written after a "fact-finding" trip to post-Ceausescu Romania, was directed by Mark Wing-Davey (he formerly ran the Central School of Speech and Drama, in London), and the ensemble acting in it is so wonderful that the production is definitely worth seeing, even though the play may leave you feeling that Churchill's visit (which lasted only a few weeks) and her own abiding Marxism do not quite equip her to tackle the complexities of post-totalitarian Europe. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 302-6989. Closes Feb. 2.)

Marvin's Room—A play about dying, suffering, and sacrifice in one family, written in a style

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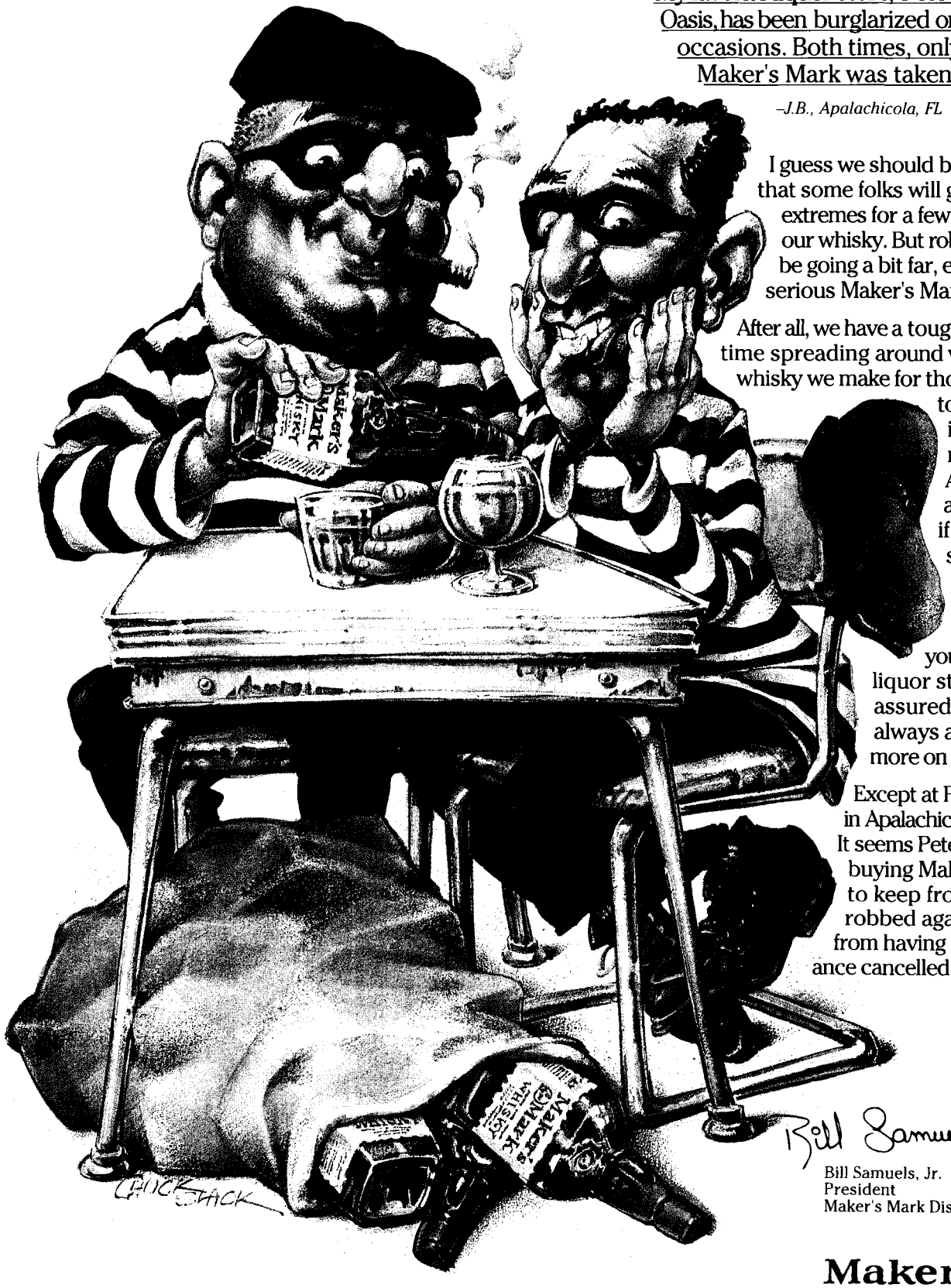

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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

so frisky as to set the teeth permanently on edge. There is a fine performance by Mark Rosenthal as a smoldering young man. Also with Alice Drummond, Laura Esterman, and Tim Monsion. Scott McPherson is the dramatist, David Petrarca the director. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

PAGEANT—A musical spoof of beauty contests. Book and lyrics by Bill Russell and Frank Kelly and music by Albert Evans. Conceived and directed by Robert Longbottom. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 262-3333.)

PARK YOUR CAR IN HARVARD YARD—Jason Robards, white-bearded and padded to portliness, plays a retired teacher, and Judith Ivey is a former student who gets a job as his housekeeper, in Israel Horovitz's very funny, touching play, which is set in Gloucester, Massachusetts, over a year's time. Under Zoe Caldwell's expert direction, the performances are as near to perfection as makes no matter. (11/18/91) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE REAL LIVE BRADY BUNCH—Episodes from the acclaimed TV series, reënacted by the Annoyance Theatre, of Chicago. Something called "The Real Live Game Show" comes first. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

RETURN TO THE FORBIDDEN PLANET—Gabriel Barré, Julee Cruise, Robert McCormick, and Louis Tucci are all appealing in this light-minded entertainment, a London import that won the Laurence Olivier Award for best musical in a year when it might have gone to "Miss Saigon" (whose producer's subsequent indignation led to the creation of a new award category). The show—a patchwork of beloved pop songs stitched together with Shakespeareana—has almost nothing to do with the cult movie it is based on, and still less to do with "The Tempest." Written and directed by Bob Carlton, it is more than anything else an occasion to laugh a bit and rock out a lot. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

THE SECRET GARDEN—This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. Subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation, it manages both to be faithful to the spirit of the book and to comment on the particular moment in time that produced it. (5/13/91) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

SIGHT UNSEEN—A new play by Donald Margulies. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Closes Feb. 9.)

SONG OF SINGAPORE—A musical with a promising concept: turn a Polish veterans' hall into a Singapore night club, circa 1941, and spill murder and mayhem onto the premises. Unfortunately, the lavish settings (by John Lee Beatty) and the musical talent cannot conceal a very thin story and a host of excruciatingly bad jokes. Another problem: on a busy night the seating arrangements here can be extremely cramped. (17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 228-0844.)

TWO SHAKESPEAREAN ACTORS—Brian Bedford and Victor Garber star in Richard Nelson's play about the nineteenth-century actors William Charles Macready and Edwin Forrest. Jack O'Brien directed. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

TUBES—A work by Blue Man Group. (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.)

WILLIE & ESTHER—Hugh Dane and Bern Nadette Stanis in a two-character play by James Graham Bronson. The work was first produced in Los Angeles, earlier this year. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES—The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. Keith Carradine makes an engaging Rogers, but that is not enough, despite Cy Coleman's pleasant score. (5/13/91) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

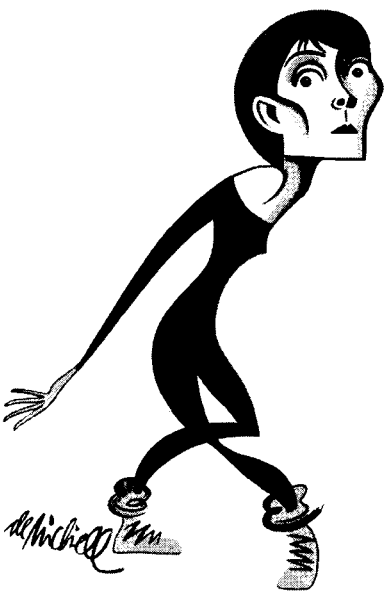
LONG RUNS

AND THE WORLD GOES 'ROUND: THE KANDER & EBB MUSICAL: A musical revue, with Karen Ziémba, Joel Blum, Terry Burrell, Marcus Lovett, and Marin Mazzie. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)... **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.)... **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run turned thirty-one last May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.)... **FOREVER PLAID:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)... **GRAND HOTEL:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. Cyd Charisse has recently joined the cast. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. The final performance here is Jan. 27; the show reopens at the Gershwin on Feb. 3)... **LOST IN YONKERS:** There's not one glimmer of honesty or authenticity in this family melodrama by Neil Simon. Set in Yonkers during the Second World War, it's about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)... **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)... **MISS SAIGON:** Oh, the horror! The horror! (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.)... **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.)... **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

DANCE

EVERY so often, we like to bring you up to date on a few of the best things that *won't* be going on about town. One of these won't-bes is a full-scale exhibition of what—in terms of fabric and art history—is probably the most precious set of dance costumes in the city. We're speaking of a special collection held by the Museum of the City of New York: forty-one costumes, nearly all for men, from the Charles Dillingham production of "The Sleeping Beauty," which was performed by Anna Pavlova's company and a huge complement of supers at the New York Hippodrome, in 1916. The designer was the Russian genius Léon Bakst. Recently, the Bakst scholar Alexander Schouvaloff gave a lecture on the artist at Lincoln Center, during which he mentioned that he'd spent some very pleasant hours examining the costumes in a Manhattan warehouse. We called the museum. "Sure," said associate curator Phyllis Magidson. "Meet me at the Sterret-Lehigh building, on 26th Street."

At the Sterret-Lehigh, we found that all the garments were shot through with wonders, but that some were simply shot. Ms. Magidson explained that damage can result from the chemical properties of the materials themselves. Weighted silk, for example, is made by soaking the fabric in metallic salts, which plumps up the individual filaments of silk. Unfortunately, over time such salts cause the fibres of silk to lose their tenacity, giving a shattered appearance to the completed garment. But sometimes deterioration is merely a matter of too little money for conservation supplies and for sufficiently spacious storage. In a box packed with several costumes so frail they could not tolerate the stress that gravity would exert on them were they hung up on hangers, the paper between garments was ominously yellowed. To repack them properly—one costume to a box, with as few folds as possible, and with new, acid-free paper—would cost a grand total of three hundred dollars. And, Ms. Magidson asked, even if the supplies were at hand, where would the additional boxes be stored? There's far too little space now.



Twyla Tharp

Why will the Bakst costumes probably never be publicly exhibited together? The answer turns out to be a matter of definitions. "We own them, and they're in the Broadway-show-costume section," said Marty Jacobs, one of Ms. Magidson's colleagues. "Yet they don't belong to a Broadway show." Could the Dance Collection of the Library of the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center do something? "Theoretically," he said. "But we aren't about to give them away to the Dance Collection."

NEW YORK CITY BALLET—Jan. 21 at 8: "Serenade," "Le Tombeau de Couperin," "Concertino," and "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue."... ¶ Jan. 22 at 8: "The Goldberg Variations" and "The Four Seasons."... ¶ Jan. 23 at 8: "Mozartiana," "The Waltz Project," and "Symphony in C."... ¶ Jan. 24 at 8: "Jewels."... ¶ Jan. 25 at 2: "Divertimento No. 15," "The Waltz Project," and "The Concert."... ¶ Jan. 25 at 8: "The Goldberg Variations" and "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue."... ¶ Jan. 26 at 1: "Jewels."... ¶ Jan. 26 at 7: "Divertimento No. 15," "The Waltz Project," and "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue."... ¶ Jan. 28 at 8: "Les Petits Riens," "Mozartiana," and "Prague Symphony."... ¶ Jan. 29 at 8: "Mozart Serenade, "Delight of the Muses" (première), and "Divertimento No. 15." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through Feb. 23.)

TWYLA THARP AND DANCERS—Opening performances of an engagement that will run through Feb. 9. Jan. 28 at 8: A special program of "Ocean's Motion" and previews of "Octet," "Grand Pas: Rhythm of the Saints" (with guest artist Patrick Dupond on this night only), and "Men's Piece."... ¶ Jan. 29 at 8: "Ocean's Motion," "Little Ballet," "Grand Pas: Rhythm of the Saints" (New York première), and "Nine Sinatra Songs." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

HERNANDO CORTEZ AND DANCERS—Presenting a program of Mr. Cortez's choreography. (Merce Cunningham Studio, 55 Bethune St., 10th floor. 924-0077. Jan. 24-25 at 9.)

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NIGHT LIFE

UNLIKE some of our colleagues in the press, we're not overly concerned with whether or not Michael Jackson sells forty million copies of "Dangerous." The other night, however, we stopped by the Academy Theatre to watch the taping of HBO's "Russell Simmons' Def Comedy Jam," and we have to admit that we found Eddie Griffin's impression of Jackson's frenetic dance moves to be fairly hilarious and riveting. The series, which will begin airing in March, is meant to be a hothouse for a new strain of standup comedy. (Simmons, who runs the seminal rap label Def Jam, has launched the careers of L.L. Cool J, Public Enemy, and Run-D.M.C.) We're not convinced that all of what we saw had its roots in hip-hop—the d.j. and the dancers seemed a little like window dressing, and Michael Jackson impressions are older than Michael Jackson. We *will* say, though, that there was an awful lot of energy in the room, and that the comics—given the opportunity to perform for an almost entirely black crowd that included Spike Lee and L.L. Cool J—were clearly thriving onstage.

That the "Def Comedy Jam" is uncensored probably goes without saying. All the comics know one or two variations of a word we'll abbreviate as "mthfkr," but the best of the performers are provocative in a broader sense. Eddie Griffin's routine, for instance, included a sharp-minded bit about the voyeurism that surrounded the recent Rodney King videotape, a bit in which a man sort of rubs his hands together and says to his girlfriend, "Turn on the TV. Let's watch Rodney King get beat up again." On another episode, Ted Carpenter turned in a Martin Luther King, Jr., impression, in which King tells Jesse Jackson that he doesn't want to be remembered as a man who won the Nobel Peace Prize but as a man who never used Jheri-Kurl. We can't think of many comedians who could get away with a Martin Luther King, Jr., impersonation, but then the "Def Comedy Jam" could teach Michael Jackson a thing or two about the meaning of the word "dangerous."

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**DAVID STALLER**, whom you may know from Broadway stages, from cabarets about town, or from the soaps ("All My Children," for example), is currently at work in the Oak Room. Mr. Staller's subjects here are "Noël and Cole," as in Coward and Porter. The late show on Fridays and Saturdays is "Americans Abroad," as in American composers living in London. Shows at nine-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A tony cabaret attained by passing through an opulent tapas restaurant, where wicker baskets overflow with fruit and vegetables and hams hang over the bar; if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. The club's second annual Brazilian festival is currently under way. **BEBEL GILBERTO**, who is the daughter of João Gilberto, and who appeared in the recent Carmen Miranda tribute at BAM, performs Jan. 21-25. The samba vocalist **ZIZI POSSI** swings into action on Jan. 28. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine, Fridays and Saturdays at nine and eleven-fifteen.

BIRDLAND, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—This northern restaurant-bar, an airy, two-tiered space with pastel walls and potted greenery, is a shade too slick for Columbia students but just right for post-collegiate jazz fans. The name is taken from the long-gone midtown pleasure dome that featured Bird himself. This week's roster includes **ROY GERSON AND HIS SWINGTET** Jan. 24-25, concentrating on the music of Louis Jordan, and the **DON FRIEDMAN** quartet on Jan. 26. Music from nine. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A jazz club that would be a perfect stop on a bus tour (there's even a souvenir shop that sells Kodak). It's a good idea to make a reservation and show up well in advance. The month-long **DIZZIE GILLESPIE** festival rolls ever onward, with the legendary trumpeter performing on a star-studded bill titled "To Bird, with Love" Jan 21-26; **STEVE KHAN** comes in on Jan. 27; and Gillespie (with a different pair of saxophonists each night) is on hand for a show called "To Diz, with Love" as of Jan. 28. First set at nine. Dining.

BLUE WILLOW, 644 Broadway, at Bleecker St. (673-6480)—This room is oddly Victorian for lower Broadway, a region almost exclusively devoted to the celebration of youth culture. You won't find any funky murals or drinks with funny names here, just marble walls, antique furnishings, and a ceiling that would be hard to hit with a baseball. It's an agreeable place for conversation, which is probably why the small jazz combos that set up here nightly often get relegated to being background music. Music from seven-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. Singer-guitarist-songwriter **MARSHALL CRENSHAW** will be here Jan. 24-25. "Life's Too Short," Crenshaw's release of last summer, is yet another testament to his talents. As a songwriter, Crenshaw can run circles around most of his pop contemporaries, but he can also rock out—especially onstage, where he usually surrounds himself with topflight musicians. Shows at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar in the heart of N.Y.U. country. It's advisable to get all your talking done between sets, because once the first chord is struck the audience here—with a little help from the management—becomes as quiet as a church congregation. A trio consisting of pianist **BARRY HARRIS**, bassist **RAY DRUMMOND**, and drummer **BILLY HIGGINS** is holding forth Jan. 22-25. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and the **MODERN JAZZ QUARTET**. The quartet, which has been doing its fastidious swinging for more than thirty years and which has over four hundred pieces in its repertoire, tends to play in big halls these days so its occasional layovers in this intimate space are to be treasured. Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **RONNY WHYTE** presides at the piano from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—In the late seventies and early eighties, this dark cave (graffitied walls, a battered pool table, rest rooms for the intrepid only) was the hub of a thriving punk-music scene—Blondie, Talking Heads, the Ramones, and Television were regular attractions. Other clubs of the era have fizzled, but CB's perseveres, and young hopefuls continue to fill the stage nightly. The British band **SWERVEDRIVER** performs here on Jan. 24 (and at Maxwell's on Jan. 25). The group, which released its début album, "Raise," last year, has been identified with the latest British trend—dreamy psychedelic guitar

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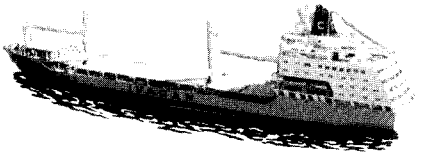

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NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

rock. But along with the atmospheric haze this band offers tough guitar riffs and an insistent beat that's sure to have your moptop shaking in no time. The Poster Children round out the bill. Music from eight-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (255-7373)—A recently inaugurated club that promises to "feature only Chicago-area blues artists working with their regular Chicago blues bands." This concept may not appeal to New York blues artists, but it affords local blues aficionados a chance to hear what they've been missing.

CONDON'S, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—Jazz clubs aren't always known for their romantic atmosphere, but Condon's earns higher marks than most. It's a low-ceilinged basement establishment, with lemon walls and abundant candlelight. The **REUNION LEGACY BAND** is in swing Jan. 21-26, and a quartet led by **CARRIE SMITH** and **ROLAND HANNA** starts work on Jan. 28. Music after nine.

EIGHTY EIGHT'S, 228 W. 10th St. (924-0088)—A small cabaret in which waiters dip and sway and struggle to reach their destinations. **SARAH ZAHN** will be here on Jan. 24. Zahn has a deft way with a melody and her shows are smartly built, but at times she overwhelms this little room with her chatty, Bette Midler-ish stage persona and her great big voice. Music starts at eight-thirty.

EXSPO, 565 W. 23rd St. (229-1123)—Like those stores where you can buy groceries, rent videos, send faxes, cultivate a tan, and book a trip to Bermuda, this place tries to offer something for everyone. It's a night club, it's a restaurant, it's an art gallery. The space has an elegant, turn-of-the-century décor; the clientele is rock, metal, and glam. Live rock and roll on Mondays, swing and big bands on Fridays and Saturdays. Music starts at eleven. Dining.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—The seating arrangements in this long, narrow, red-velvet-and-mirror-walled basement make flying coach seem roomy; nevertheless, it's one of the city's top jazz spots—thanks largely to the club's talent bookers. But watch your head. **KENNY KIRKLAND** leads a quintet Jan. 21-26, and **ILLINOIS JACQUET'S** big band takes hold on Jan. 28. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

J'S, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An Upper West Side jazz room, one steep flight up from the hurly-burly. Jazz people are on the premises nightly except Sundays, when a jukebox stocked with sixties rock and soul lights up. Music from eight-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, a menu full of items like bangers and mash, and a piano. Knickerbocker is an airy, good-spirited place and, while music often takes a back seat to conversation, some able piano-and-bass teams turn up regularly. **MIKE LE DONNE** and **DENNIS IRWIN** are here Jan. 22-25. Music from nine-forty-five.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—Situated in a neighborhood that boasts the Puck Building to the west and a host of windshield washers to the east, this modest space provides a forum for free-thinking musicians. Beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. The **MEAT PUPPETS**, an Arizona thrash-metal-punk-country trio, have been doing their fiercely independent thing for almost a decade now. Every time they turn up, they seem to have moved on to a new style, but their cult following always manages to keep up with them. The last time we caught the band, metal had the upper hand, but we wouldn't want to make any predictions about their shows here, which take place Jan. 24-25. (**SCRAWL** fills out the bill.) Other events: Gretchen Langheld's House Afire on Jan. 23; **JOHN ZORN, ANTHONY COLEMAN**, and others on Jan. 26; the **JAZZ PASSENGERS** on Jan. 27; **NORA YORK** and others on Jan. 28. Music after nine.

LONE STAR ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—It's named for its Texas décor, but a perhaps more apt name would be the Second Chance, since so many lost, forgotten, faded rockers turn up here. But the club's busy schedule includes a variety of newer acts, too. The Fredericksburg, Virginia, trio **SAFFIRE, THE UPPITY BLUES WOMEN** will be here on Jan 24. The group, which plays riotous barroom blues and sings Bessie Smith-style numbers about love, sexual politics, and middle age, recently released a loudly praised second album, called "Hot Flash," which includes "(Mr. Insurance Man) Take Out That Thing," "Shopping for Love," and "Sloppy Drunk." Asked recently if the group engages in "male bashing"—whatever that is—the group's Ann Rabson said, "I love men. I've certainly married enough of them." Music after nine. Dining.

MANNY'S CAR WASH, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—This blues bar stands apart from the Upper East Side's usual array of singles bars, and has become a big draw for the neighborhood's army of post-collegiates. The neon beer signs, Manny's caps, and funky drink concoctions lend the place a frat-house aura, but don't let that put you off: this long, dark, brick-walled room is a good spot to catch blues artists both major and minor. Sets from nine-fifteen except on Sundays, when shows begin at eight.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—A plain blue back room whose far wall is decorated with round things: a Frisbee, some singles, a drum head, and the woofer from a speaker cabinet, to name a few. The beer of choice here is Rolling Rock—by a landslide—and the crowd may make you feel as if you have a midterm to study for, but many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. **SWERVEDRIVER** and the Poster Children appear on Jan. 25; the **MEAT PUPPETS** and **SCRAWL** share the bill on Jan. 26. Shows at ten on Thursdays, and at eleven on Fridays and Saturdays.

Swervedriver at CBGB and Maxwell's

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—There's more to Michael's Pub than Woody Allen, whose occasional Monday-night Dixieland binges have given the place a little star cachet. Non-filmmakers can usually be found onstage here the rest of the week, in a main dining room that strives for the appearance of a British pub but looks more like a good old American family restaurant. Still, there's a real nice red telephone booth when you walk in the door. The **WISEGUYS** are currently in evidence here. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—Not to be confused with its richer cousin, the Rainbow Room, which is just down the hall. There, you'll find expansive Art Deco glitter; here, intimate nineties glitter. The performers, with their backs to the window, have to compete with a view of the Hudson, the George Washington Bridge, and beyond. Singer-pianist **BILLY STRITCH**—formerly of Montgomery, Plant, and Stritch—is going it alone here through the end of the month. Stritch has just released his first solo record, a collection of pop and jazz songs by Cole Porter, Antonio Carlos Jobim, and Michele Brourman, among others. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Mondays.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut decorated with a fruit-and-bamboo motif and dedicated to such things as calypso, reggae, and bossa nova. S.O.B.'s dance floor is always jumping with Rastas and N.Y.U. students, and there's always someone onstage shouting "Put your hands in the air!" **GATO BARBIERI**, an Argentine saxophonist who combines jazz with a host of Latin-American styles—from Brazilian sambas to tangos to Afro-Cuban rhythms—is here Jan. 22-23 (with sets at eight and eleven-thirty). Music usually starts at nine Tuesdays through Thursday, and at ten on Fridays and Saturdays. Closed Sundays. Dining.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. The **MANHATTAN JAZZ QUINTET** is here through Jan. 26; **BORDERLINE** performs Jan. 28-29. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** plays on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The late Max Gordon, who opened this holiest of jazz shrines in 1935, once described the club's early patrons as a mix of "poets, W.P.A. writers, hustlers, broads on the make, and moochers." Its history embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins.

The **WALT DICKERSON** trio has the stage Jan. 21-26. A threesome led by guitarist **JOHN ABERCROMBIE** begins work on Jan. 28. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays. Music after nine-thirty.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Two floors of no-nuke veggie entertainment and consciousness-raising. Listen to bands play in the Summer of Love-muralled back room; buy a tie-dyed T-shirt at the Volkswagen-bus curio shop; catch up on current events at the bulletin board and community calendar. Or, if you'd rather just be mellow, crash out in the basement hippie love pad. **NEW POTATO CABOOSE**, which will play here on Jan. 23, is a Washington, D.C.-based outfit that works hard for its money: the band's sets run from sea chanteys to gospel to country to "Rocky Raccoon" to seventies-style rock and roll. The group plays a long, full set, replete with solos of every variety. **BLACK 47**, a genre-bending band that has attracted an awful lot of attention in Irish bars downtown, comes in on Jan 24. Shows from ten.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

WE'RE always being told that the best part of travelling is discovering something that you couldn't have found at home. So when friends in Milan offered to take us out for a molto trendy dinner, we wound up at Juleps, whose awning reads "New York Bar e Restaurant." There we were, surrounded by exposed-brick walls, faced with nachos and tostadas, and confronted with a bartender who had to be arm-twisted into giving change after having charged seventeen dollars for a half-shot of vodka with tonic and a Margarita with questionable triple sec. The only thing that distinguished the clientele from the overachievers who barstool it up on Amsterdam Avenue was that, in Milan, everybody wore brown shoes. Anxious though we were to be polite, our face must have given us away. "O.K., no more trendy," promised our hosts. "We take you to something very old-style."

Of course, it was called Nuova Idea. Located at the edge of town, in a warehouse that would have pleased even the most diehard Tribecan, it

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was as working-class as a weekend boccie tournament. The inside was divided into two enormous spaces. The back half was a high-energy, frozen-in-time gay disco that wouldn't have looked out of place off the Belt Parkway. But in the front half we came under the spell of sorcery that instantly transformed some of the most surreal moments of Bertolucci into scenes from everyday life. As a six-man band on a vast stage performed, hundreds of mainly middle-aged and elderly couples—men with women, women with women, men with men—waltzed, polkaed, foxtrotted, and tangoed in breathtaking arcs around a lofty, barely spotlighted ballroom. Dead serious they were. Heads snapped to a turn, practiced hands signalled direction. Dancers didn't merely hold their partners: they clutched, embraced, caressed, and engulfed them. Whatever passion they'd kept hidden while in the world outside was being unleashed all at once. "Funny, yes?" asked our hosts. We nodded, our soul filled with envy. "You have something like this at home, no?" No.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

ICE CAPADES—Skating stars and lavish sets. (Madison Square Garden. Jan. 22-26. For information about show times and tickets, call 465-6000. . . . ¶ Meadowlands Arena. Jan. 28-Feb. 2. For information about show times and tickets, call 1-201 935-3900.)

"ISRAEL: THE NEXT GENERATION"—A two-week festival of Israeli arts. Jan. 22-23 and Jan. 25 at 8, and Jan. 26 at 2 and 7: The Cameri Theatre of Tel Aviv presents "Hamlet," in Hebrew, with English-version headsets available. . . . ¶ Jan. 23 and Jan. 25 at 8: Singer Ofra Haza hosts an evening of Yemenite folk dance. . . . ¶ Jan. 27-28 at 8: "Jabar's Head," a multilingual cabaret work presented by a group of Arab actors from Haifa. . . . ¶ Jan. 27 at 8 and Jan. 28 at 2: "The Summer of Aviya," a play by Gila Almagor. Performed in English. . . . ¶ Jan. 29 at 8: The Gesher Theatre Company presents Tom Stoppard's "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead," in Russian, with English-version headsets available. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. The festival continues through Feb. 2.)

JOHN JESURUN—Presenting "Iron Lung," a new work. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. Jan. 23-26 at 7:30.)

"BOOK OF JOB"—A new work by Elizabeth Swados in which Job is, literally, a clown. (One Dream, 232 West Broadway. Jan. 22-25 and Jan. 29 at 8, and Jan. 26 at 3. For information about tickets, call 219-1160. Through Feb. 2.)

"DIALECTICA/DIABOLICO OR DOG SPELLED BACKWARDS"—A new work by the performance group Purgatorio, Ink. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Jan. 23-26 at 8:30.)

"4 WOMEN SNUFF 1,000 POINTS OF LIGHT"—A play by Susan Young with Gail Freund, based loosely on Peggy Noonan's book "What I Saw at the Revolution." A performance by Madeline Olnek will start things off. (Wow Café, 59 E. 4th St. 460-8067. Jan. 24-25 at 9.)

DANCE THEATRE WORKSHOP—Jan. 23-25 at 8 and Jan. 26 at 3: Marty Pottenger presents her new play, "Dirt," which is about six dead people buried in Brooklyn. . . . ¶ Jan. 27-28 at 8: Mary Beth Miller, a deaf performance artist, in "I Always Wanted to Be an Opera Singer." (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077.)

P.S. 122—Jan. 23-26 at 8: Mr. Fashion in a production of Ethyl Eichelberger's "Nefertiti." Also on the bill is "The Sarah Vaughan Story." . . ¶ Jan. 23-26 at 9: Clarinda Mac Low. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

DIXON PLACE—Jan. 21 and Jan. 28 at 8: Holly Hughes and Mary Ellen Strom. . . . ¶ Jan. 23 at 8: David Drake in "The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me." . . ¶ Jan. 25 at 10:30: Frank Maya. (258 Bowery, near Houston St. 219-3088.)

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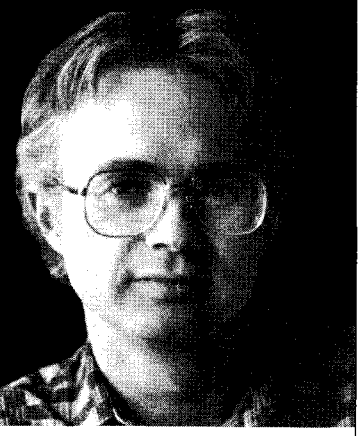

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ART

ALTHOUGH the words "art critic" rarely appear next to "fireman" or "ballerina" on the child's classic list of ideal professions, people do not become art critics out of the blue. Nor, contrary to the crankier views of some art critics' parents, do they do so as the realization of some desire, already evident at birth, to find fault with everything they come across. Nor do they become critics because of some other "failed" career. While some critics may also be painters—or poets, or insurance brokers, or waiters, or, at least in the old days, just enviably rich—most seem to prefer not having stuff stuck under their nails and splattered on their clothes. Art criticism, for all its attendant neuroses, is a strictly literary impulse released through visual works.

For us, the Whitney Museum's 1975 Richard Tuttle show was a major catalyst, a "Eureka!" experience, wherein we found no fault at all but, rather, sudden, intense enlightenment as to the enormous power that art, however fragile and even flimsy it may look, can hold. The great Tuttle show—whose magical effects rested largely on a smattering of frail, attenuated wire and string wall constructions that created shadows—sure looked flimsy. Even then, in the postminimalist, late-Conceptual era, the show was *controversial*. (In fact, Marcia Tucker, its curator, was asked to leave as a result of the brouhaha; she went on to found the New Museum.) Fully occupying a whole floor of rooms yet barely even there, this was one naked emperor to remember. But, having been in college at the time and not a critic, we had no place on the official reviewing stand.

Tuttle is in the air again, we are happy to report. A couple of very early pieces, predating the Whitney show by several years, may be seen in an exhibition called "Stubborn Painting: Now and Then," at Max Protetch (560 Broadway; through January 25). They're O.K. One particularly mousy painting, on a shaped and dun-colored cloth, seems not so much stubborn as appropriately meek for an artist who was just starting out and who also held a job at Betty Parsons. At Mary Boone (417 West Broadway), however, in the rear reception area for an unspecified duration, you will find an absolutely wonderful new work—a fey and flirtatious construction, with Orientalist tones, made of wood, paint, string, and light, that confirmed our first suspicions that Tuttle was a Mannerist. (He will have a show at Boone next year.) Best news of all may be the signs of Tuttle's burgeoning influence on a younger generation of artists: see Luca Buvoli's three shy pieces at Nicole Klagsbrun (51 Greene St.; through January 25) for a possible hint of how we felt in '75.

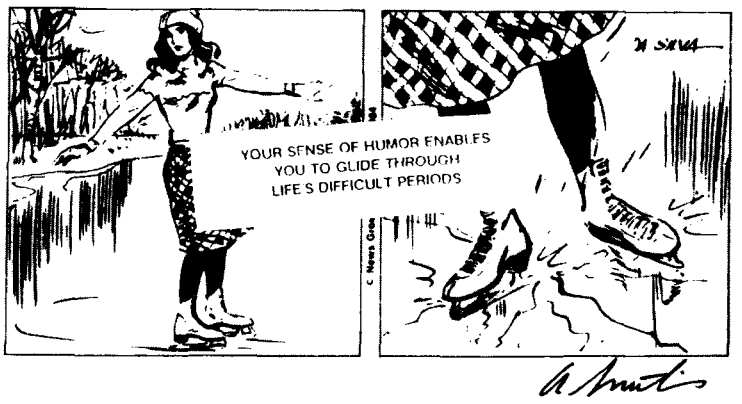
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"The Royal Art of Benin," a selection of nearly a hundred and fifty brass, ivory, terra-cotta, and wood sculptures—busts of kings, sceptres of office, side-blow horns, and other regalia—from the kingdom that flourished (from the fourteenth century to the nineteenth) in what is now southern Nigeria. . . . ¶ "American Rococo, 1750-75." Furniture, silver, paintings, engravings, ceramics, and glass made in pre-Revolutionary America. Starts Jan. 26. . . . ¶ The exhibition of East Asian lacquer from the collection of Florence and Herbert Irving may be the most impeccably installed show of the year. The slaty shades of gray on the walls and the pin-spot lights positioned above the vitrines brilliantly set off the already vivid array of red and black boxes, lap desks, *saké* bottles, and such, some of which are inlaid with pearly abalone and gold. There is no fuss here, just punch. Through Feb. 25. . . . ¶ A group of Alpine landscape sketches and local genre scenes by John Singer Sargent, made during a youthful jaunt through the Bernese Oberland, in 1870. Through March 22. . . . ¶ A retrospective of the works of Stuart Davis (1892-1964), including a hundred and seventy-five paintings, murals, watercolors, and drawings. Through Feb. 16. . . . ¶ The redesigned and renovated Arms and Armor galleries are open, and jammed to the hilt. The central Equestrian Court is still here, regally appointed, and it is now surrounded by eight new displays of Japanese, European, Islamic, and American weaponry and armor. . . . ¶ "The Lotus Transcendent." The Eilenberg collection, from which this show has been selected, is not particularly comprehensive nor focussed on grand masterpieces, but it does sparkle in many unexpected ways. For instance, it includes a group of bronze sculptures from Indonesia that many consider to be the finest privately assembled collection of such material in the world. . . . ¶ Three new permanent galleries are home to more than four hundred nineteenth-century European sculptures and decorative objects. . . . ¶ Candelabras, snuff boxes, and hotel façades are just some of the subject matters depicted in a show of eighteenth-century French drawings. Through March 15. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—A slice of works by Art Spiegelman relating to his "Maus" comic-strip books. The initial effect of this densely crowded installation of storyboards, outtakes, digressions, and source materials is of an especially volatile family argument exploding right in your head. Like all traumatic dramas, this one is deeply upsetting but cathartic as well. Through Jan. 28. . . . ¶ A show of twenty-six *Objets from* the sixties and seventies, including a Noguchi "Akari" lamp and a Castiglioni "Terrarium" lamp. Alas, no lava is in sight. Through March 29. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until late spring.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A retrospective of the works of William Wegman, which includes nearly two hundred paintings, drawings, photographs, and videotapes. Starts Jan. 24. (For more on Wegman, see Galleries—57th Street Area.) . . . ¶ Seventy multimedia works, from 1971 to the present, by Alexis Smith. Through March 1. . . . ¶ "Celebrating Calder." An exhibition, drawn primarily from the museum's collection, that is a fine illustration of Alexander Calder's (1898-1976) breadth and depth. Through Feb. 2. . . . ¶ "Variations on Themes," a show of serial works in various graphic mediums, by, among others, Terry Winters, Dennis Adams, Kiki Smith, and Jasper Johns. Through March 15. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, 11 to 6.)



Self-portrait by Alexis Smith (Whitney Museum)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Biomorphicism and Organic Abstraction in Twentieth-Century Decorative Arts." . . . ¶ A show of contemporary Native American works, including ceramics, elk-horn carvings, and Pomo baskets. Through Jan. 27. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Alternative Museum, 594 Broadway—"Artists of Conscience: 16 Years of Social and Political Commentary." A decent primer of the political art of the past few decades, including such notable figures as Nancy Spero, Leon Golub, Luis Camnitzer, David Hammons, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Martha Rosler, Carrie Mae Weems, Barbara Kruger, and Group Fury. Too little work is presented for the viewer to be able to understand what any of these artists are really up to; in the case of lesser-known artists, such as Nancy O'Connor, who has spent more than a decade documenting the obscure, dwindling community of black cowboys in Texas, this can be frustrating. Over all, the show does a disservice to the noble intentions of the art it displays; its very title establishes a simplistic polarization, suggesting that artists whose work lacks overt political content are without conscience. Through Jan. 25. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"From Expressionism to Resistance, Art in Germany 1909-36." A very rich exhibition, from the collection of Marvin and Janet Fishman. Although the show does not center on the better-known masters of Die Brücke, many of them are represented by a work or two. At nearly every turn there is a discovery to be made, even when the works themselves are not great. Ludwig Meidner's "Apocalyptic Landscape," while perhaps somewhat derivative stylistically, is an electrifying anthropomorphic modern townscape, in which every building, rock, and tree stump is in the process of eruption. Meidner's other work can be seen as precursors of contemporary German Expressionist works (such as Immendorff's), and, to a lesser degree, of the hero paintings of Baselitz. And the Meidner show is just one of the gems of fascinating avenues this exhibition explores. Through Jan. 26. . . . ¶ "The Sigmund Freud Antiquities." Close to a hundred of the two thousand Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Chinese objects the psychoanalyst collected. Even the ordinary pieces are full of interest, if only because Freud once owned them; for example, there's the small steatite portrait of Amenophis I and his mother, Ahmose-Nofretiri, Egyptian rulers who, in the ultimate resolution of the Oedipus complex, were buried together. The best part of the show is a series of black-and-white photographs taken in 1938, by Edmund Engelman, of Freud's study and examining room shortly

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before he fled Vienna for London. Although they are ordinary pictures, they reveal just how Freud lived with his powerful assembly of statues: we find them jammed together in cases, perched atop various pieces of furniture, and lined up at the edge of his desk like an army of history's most exalted foot soldiers. Through Feb. 18. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5; Thursdays, 11 to 8; Fridays, 11 to 3.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—Seventeenth-century Dutch drawings—of the landscape, genre, and figure variety—by Rembrandt, Ruisdael, Goltzius, and many others. Starts Jan. 22. . . . ¶ A small show of printed books and bindings produced in seventeenth-century Flanders and Holland. Starts Jan. 22. . . . ¶ Selections on view from the Library's permanent collection include one of their three Gutenberg Bibles, Stevenson's autograph manuscript of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," and the original scores of symphonies by Brahms and Mahler. Starts Jan. 22. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—A group of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century *santos*—carved-wood holy objects made by family artisans in Puerto Rico. (Open daily, 11:30 to 7:30.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"1+1+1," a series of recent projects by Alfredo Jaar, primarily in the form of large-scale light-box installations. Through April 19. . . . ¶ "The Big Nothing or Le Presque Rien," a group exhibition in which each artist has been asked to contemplate the notions of emptiness and materiality. Through April 19. (Part of the show runs at the French Embassy, 972 Fifth Ave., at 78th St. Open Mondays, closed Saturdays. Through Feb. 28.). . . ¶ Jeffry Mitchell's installation, titled "My Spirit," consists of rubber, plaster, and latex tableaux of cartoon figures, toy creatures, and other kitschy icons. Through April 19. . . . ¶ In the "don't make me ovah" department: walk by the museum's Broadway window and you may see a museum patron's face age twenty-five years in thirty seconds. It's "The Age Machine" that's doing it, through digital technology and a personal computer. Through April 19. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Imagining the New World: Columbian Iconography" is an amiable display of depictions of the Americas—maps, globes, books, etchings—and scientific instruments. Much of the material is of primarily scholarly interest, but there is plenty to keep the non-specialist enchanted: Ptolemaic atlases; book illustrations of two-headed babies and other New World monsters; and an etching of natives trying to capture cormorants by wearing pumpkins on their heads. There are also paintings of explorer flotillas, and several portraits reputedly of Columbus himself (including one attributed to Ghirlandaio). Through Jan. 26. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, 11 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—A large selection of manuscripts, letters, photographs, and other objects that shed light on the life of Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892–1950). Through Feb. 29. (Berg Collection.). . . ¶ Merlin, Mordred, Gawain, and Galahad leap off the pages and prints of "King Arthur: Looking at the Legend." Through Feb. 22. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall.) (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—Thirty paintings and sculptures by this year's artists-in-residence: Ada Pilar Cruz, Leonardo Drew, and Eve Sandler. Through March 1. . . . ¶ "Africa and the Diaspora" has nearly a hundred works from the museum's collection, dating from the fifth century to the present. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Short List—Glenn Goldberg, Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through Jan. 30); **per Kirkeby,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. (through Feb. 22); **Gaston Lachaise,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. (open Mondays, through Feb. 22); **John Newman,** Mathes, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (through March 7); **Man Ray** and **Meret Oppenheim,** Kent, 47 E. 63rd St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through March 27); **Frederick J. Sykes,** Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. (through Feb. 22); **Bill Traylor,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (open Mondays, through Feb. 8).

PREDISPOSED

What's six feet high, orange, all metal, and weighs a hundred and twenty pounds? The outsized replica of a standard city trash receptacle that is now on view in Peter Cooper Square (Third Avenue at 7th Street). Matthew Cusick, an art student at Cooper Union, built the giant garbage can to symbolize New York's colossal waste-disposal problems. The dustbins on the street, he felt, just weren't getting the job done. "Every one of these receptacles was overflowing with contributions," he said. "That created an uneasiness in me. They weren't big enough." As it happened, he had already been experimenting with the diamond-shaped steel mesh that constitutes the bulk of the can's structure. His most recent effort with this material had been a twelve-foot-high cage, which he had set atop a huge exhaust fan that blew black feathers all around a human occupant. "Some girls said, 'Oh, a go-go cage. That's about domination.'"

Such work comes under the heading of what Mr. Cusick calls "engagement art," and the public has certainly been engaged with his gargantuan rubbish repository: in addition to slam-dunking their newspapers and coffee cups, people have tossed themselves and even one of the city's own regulation trash cans into Mr. Cusick's creation. All of which, he claims, is fine by him. "I wanted people to be able to use it. If it was too big, they would see it as an unrealistic joke. At this height, it's not threatening." There's been no official comment from the Department of Sanitation, but Mr. Cusick reports that one night last month some sanitation workers did approach the can. "I got nervous—I thought they were going to tell me to get rid of it. But they just laughed and said 'Don't give the city any ideas.'"

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

William Wegman Fest—Go big or stay home. Three exhibitions this winter are dedicated to exploring the broad range of Wegman's work. The retrospective at the Whitney (organized by the Kunstsmuseum Lucerne) is the most extensive ever for the artist, and will be up for three months. On the gallery front, Holly Solomon (724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.; open Mondays, through Feb. 15) has new paintings and Polaroids. And Pace-MacGill (32 E. 57th St.; through Feb. 22) is showing black-and-white photographs taken in the seventies.

Short List—Milton Avery, Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Feb. 1); **Jose Bedia** (through Feb. 1) and **Richard Shaw** (through Feb. 29), Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.; **Ronald Bladen,** Washburn, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 1); **Jorge Castillo** and **Francisco Leiro,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Feb. 1); **Gregory Gillespie,** Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through March 7); **Robert Graham,** Robert

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Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 1); **TERENCE LA NOUE,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 8); **SACHA SOSNO,** Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 1); **JOYCE TREIMAN,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Jan. 25).

GALLERIES—SoHo

GREGORY AMENOFF—The first show of drawings by a painter who's been working in the same tiresomely narrow way for a decade and a half. He has expanded his scope somewhat, adding to his Dove-Hartley kind of American abstraction a Martin-Walkowitz edge, but the work's still tedious. Through Feb. 1. (Munroe, 130 Prince St.)

BÅRD BREIVIK—Meticulously constructed abstract sculptures made of black granite, wire, wood, brass, and other materials. These works are fetishistically well done but predictable. Through Feb. 8. (Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway.)

MICHAEL CHANDLER—Large, dashing, Richter-like abstract paintings featuring arabesques of smeared paint and with an exuberance like that of the once ubiquitous Paul Jenkins. Through Feb. 1. (Ala, 560 Broadway.)

CLYDE CONNELL / ERSY—This self-taught nonagenarian from Shreveport, Louisiana, is something of a legend in the South. These figurative wood-and-papier-mâché totems, with iron spikes for feet and heavy rusted springs for breasts, are at once majestic and self-satirical. / But the horrifically cutesy little sculptures by Ersy, of mice, asparagus, ostriches' feet, sieves, and birds' skulls, are strictly gift-shop fare. Through Feb. 1. (Roger, 136 Prince St.)

CHUCK CONNELLY—A show of portraits. This artist paints in a deceptively skillful thrift-shop style, one somewhat similar to that of Alice Neel, though Connelly employs a much darker palette than she does. When the artist depends primarily on gnarly paint application, the work is of limited interest, but when he plays around with his imagery, the results are often magically demented. There's the long-haired girl who stares in a mirror and sees a daisy there, and the six-eyed woman holding a set of dolls, not to mention the one-armed barmaid and the cook who looks a lot like Kitty Carlisle Hart and who holds a cookbook that has pots, knives, and forks shooting out of it. Through Jan. 25. (Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway.)

MOIRA DRYER—Very beautiful paintings on wood of rainy fields of smeared Kelly green and bloody terra-cotta. The works are heartfelt and somewhat reassuringly depressing. A few shapes and recesses have been cut into the wood here and there, and these more self-consciously postmodernist interventions are not so interesting. They seem superfluous, and distract us from what the artist does so well, which is to paint. Through Feb. 1. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

LILI DUJOURIE—There are basically two types of work in this show: two-tone marble slabs, some of them ranging across the floor and up a wall, which look as if they were shadows, and leggy steel cabinets that contain or are covered with rumpled cloths cast in plaster. Add to this a spidery cracked mirror and you have an aesthetic that is meant to look deliberately cast off but that is calculatedly romantic. Through Feb. 8. (Louver, 130 Prince St.)

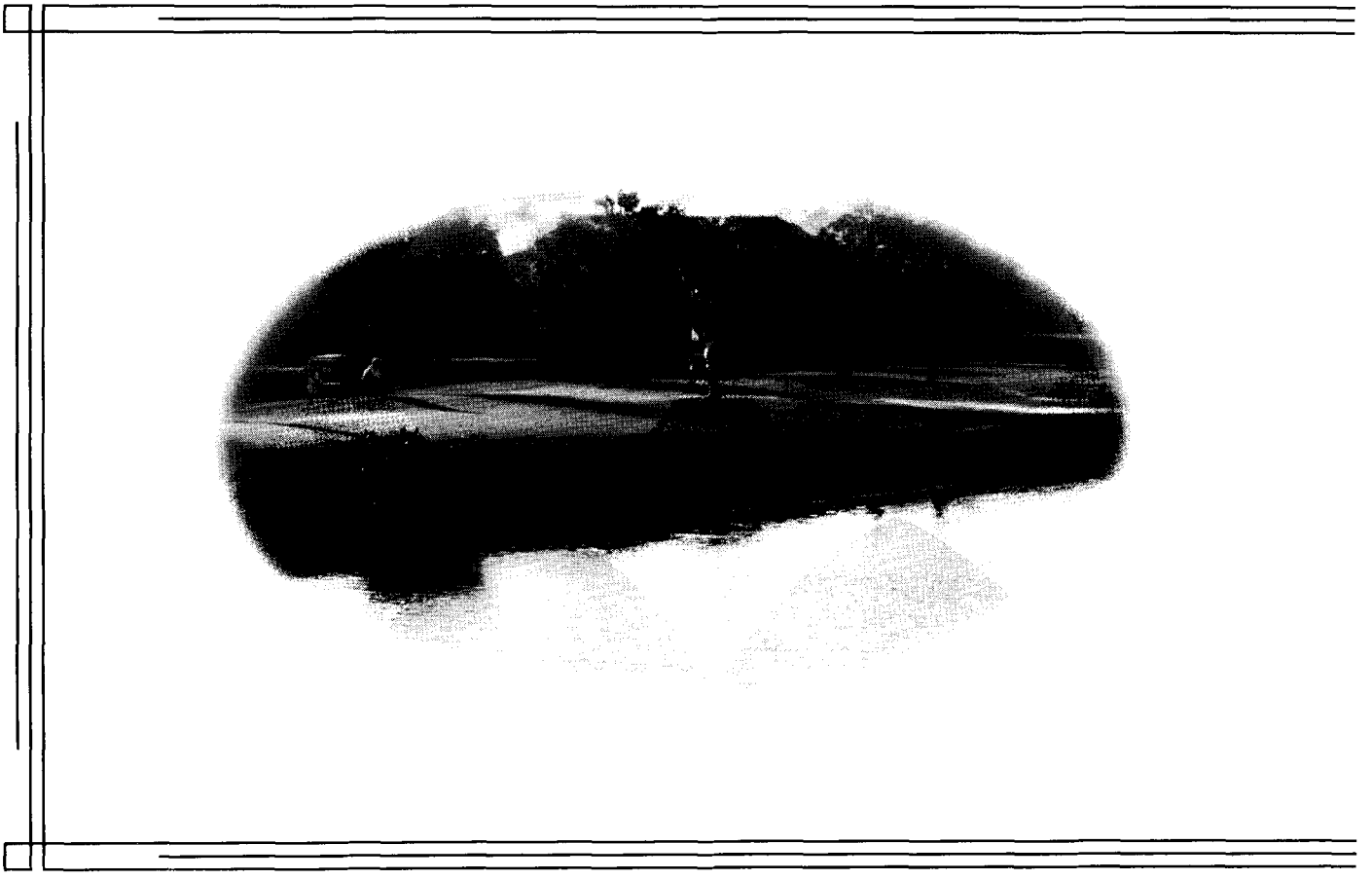
LEON GOLUB—Four strong new paintings that reaffirm the artist's links to the American social-realist tradition of Shahn and Cadmus. They are large, with cracked surfaces, and, like his famous terrorist paintings, they are about male aggression. Through Feb. 15. (Baer, 476 Broome St.)

SOL LEWITT—The main work here is a mammoth white sculpture—made of wood meant to simulate the look of cinder blocks—with a tapered wall-like section that diminishes in width as it grows taller and deeper. It fills the gallery, and, while beautiful and monumental, it is also menacingly airless, like some complex of industrial ovens. Through Jan. 25. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

MARIO MERZ—This major Arte Povera artist's charms are often elusive, but these mixed-media works from the early and middle eighties are quite accessible. In one painting, several bison are cut off at the hooves, while in "The Giant Woodsmen" two loggers, balanced on conical logs, are represented by their feet only. Also on display is a canvas igloo with one section made of beeswax. All the works are decorated with rich, expressionistically applied colors. They give expression not so much to the puffed-up machismo that was in full flower at Merz' Guggenheim Museum retrospective of two years ago as to a more engaging and open-ended poetry of decay. Through Feb. 22. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

MARCEL ODENBACH—Because of its emphasis on the marketplace, New York often misses out when it comes to certain noncommercial developments in art. This is especially the case with video art, more especially with its European practitioners. Odenbach, a German, has attracted critical acclaim in Europe for more than a decade, but the central piece in this exhibition, his first one in New York, is somewhat trite. On one side of the room is a single monitor showing a German terrorist breaking down on television. Facing this is a cluster of monitors all showing the same image of a ferocious German shepherd, overlain with images of such historical events as the Bolshevik Revolution, the Intifada, and the Vietnam War. Through Feb. 1. (Shainman, 560 Broadway.)

JACK PIERSON—This artist's first full-scale solo show is about distressed young love, and, in keeping with that immortal subject, as well as with today's very mortal climate for lovers and artists alike, the show is halting, ephemeral, skittish, aethestically self-conscious in the extreme—in other words, almost flamboyantly understated. The many pieces on view include simple figurative drawings; color photographs of American scenes that look like faded fifties or early-sixties postcards blown up; wall reliefs composed of found plastic letters; and black-and-white assemblages made of poster images. Pierson has a marvellously light touch and a pronounced talent for evocation. He joins the writer Dennis Cooper and the filmmaker Gus Van Sant



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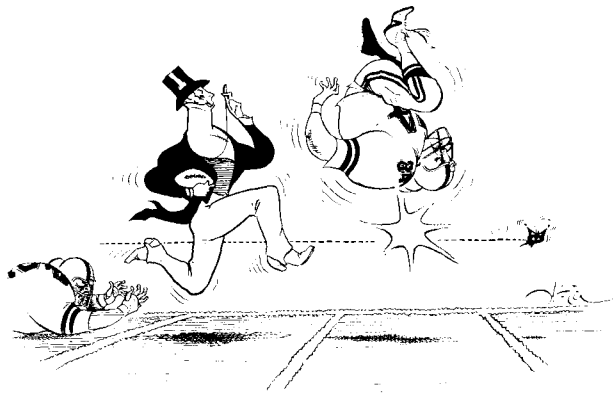
in staking out a new and lyrical genre *noir* that seems to exist on the far side of never-never land and, at least for our purposes, somewhere east of Idaho. Through Feb. 29. (Cugliani, 40 Wooster St. . . . ¶An assortment of more new work by Pierson can be seen at White Columns, 154 Christopher St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 12 to 6; through Feb. 9.)

Pruitt & Early—This team's specialty seems to be the decorative style and rituals of white teen-age boys, interlarded with vaguely lampooning references to the styles of many of their own colleagues-in-installation. The front-gallery ensemble, a paean to *black* teen culture, featuring music, an all-over-gold-foil treatment, and oddly mounted poster images of Afro-American pop heroes and political martyrs, is thus a departure, and it's stupid and devoid of funk, but pretty harmless. The rear gallery, however, is home turf for the artists. It features plastic shrink-wrapped girls'-room pillows, a slam-bam-thank-you van adorned with the image of a blond-bombshell teen-playmate and subverted beer-can slogans like "Gimmie Head Till I'm Dead" and "To Hell with Your Mountains Give Me Your Busch," and large twin photographs of the artists, hanging as if autoasphyxiated, which recall most other male-artist teams, including both Gilbert & George and Clegg & Guttmann. Pruitt & Early are onto something, but they risk squeezing it to death. Through Jan. 25. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

Allan Wexler—There is a tortured kind of wackiness to this artist's furniture designs, which include a table and chairs planted on plots of grass, models for such things as "growing tables," and a tablecloth with four shirts sewn into it. Through Feb. 8. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

Rachel Whiteread—This sculptor, out of her concern with the space around ordinary objects, creates works of profound mystery and eerie poetry. Some of the forms are cast in unlikely materials—one such is an object that is rendered in crisply fragile, yellowish dental plaster and which looks as if it would just fill the space between a bed and the floor. Each piece evokes a sense of a possible source; for instance, there's an arched form,



made of reddish-brown rubber, which depicts the empty space around a mortuary slab but also suggests a doorway laid to rest. The one "original" work is a mass carved out of Carrara marble and propped against the wall; it, too, is based on a mortuary slab, though it is the size of a double bed. Through Feb. 8. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St.)

"Stubborn Painting: Now and Then"—There has been a rash of high-minded abstract-painting shows recently, and, despite its leaden title, this is probably the best of them, if only because it is historically oriented. The show starts with the eccentric abstractions of Forrest Bess, some of the odder pathways down which Paul Feeley wandered, and three of Philip Guston's more agitated canvases, including one from 1965, when he was at the end of his dialogue with abstraction. There is a fascinating early Elizabeth Murray, from 1974, in which the germ of her later eccentricity appears in the guise of geometry. But what is to be made of the Philip Taaffe painting hanging near the Paul Feeley that inspired it, except that the younger artist has made a new, improved version of the elder's work? It is unfortunate that this show's chain of individualized abstraction tends to break apart when it reaches the self-conscious eighties. Through Jan. 25. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

Group Shows—At **Nosei**, 100 Prince St.: Works on paper by eighteen artists. Included are beautiful patterned watercolors by Peter Schuyff, which in certain ways are more satisfying than his paintings; delightful and somewhat nutty coloring-book versions of St. George slaying a dragon and of a contemporary mother-and-child by Gian Marco Montesano; several sexy and strong drawings of helices, knots, and other suggestions of the inner body by Nancy Bowen; and a gorgeous watercolor by Stephen Mueller. Through Jan. 30. . . . **Shafrazi**, 130 Prince St.: A massive show, spanning the twentieth century, of works on paper—from Kandinsky to Nauman, Matisse to Artschwager. The works fall along the entire spectrum of quality from great to bad, with frequent stops at indifferent. There are some charged juxtapositions in the installation, such as that of Léger and Baechler, but there are others in which the arrangement merely ruins the work, as in a clump of gestural drawings by Kline, Baselitz, Marden, and Rothenberg. Through Jan. 25.

Short List—**Peter Agostini**, Clasen, 470 Broome St. (through Feb. 29); **Karl Benjamin**, Snyder, 588 Broadway (through Feb. 15); **James Lee Byars**, Baghoomian, 555 Broadway (through Feb. 1); **John Ferren**, Perlow, 560 Broadway (through Feb. 15); **Frank Gardner**, O.K. Harris, 383 West Broadway (through Feb. 1); **Richard Long** and **James Turrell**, SteinGladstone, 99 Wooster St. (through March 14); **Christopher Lucas**, Good, 532 Broadway (through Feb. 22); **Claire Moore**, Kelly, 591 Broadway

We all remember a simpler time. Phones rang less. Laughter rang true. The world turned slowly. You ran out the door to greet the new day. And all you needed was a friend and a game to make it worthwhile. But maybe the times weren't simpler at all. Maybe all you really need is a place to simplify yourself again.

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(through Feb. 4); **JEAN-PIERRE RAYNAUD,** Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway (through Feb. 8); **FAITH RINGGOLD,** Steinbaum, 132 Greene St. (through Feb. 18).

OTHER GALLERIES

SHORT LIST—DENNIS OPPENHEIM, P.S. 1, 46-01 21st St., Long Island City (opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays; through Feb. 9); **ARTHUR RACKHAM,** Butler Library, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. (open Mondays through Fridays, 9 to 4:45; through Feb. 19).

PHOTOGRAPHY

IT would be a shame to miss "Picturing Africa: Photographs of the Zulu, 1870-1900," at the Metropolitan Museum (extended through February 28), but with this exhibition it would be understandable. The last time we were at the museum, we had quite a time just finding the Photograph Study Collection, where these photographs have been installed. (They are recent additions to the Department of the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas.) Still, the search was worth it—not because the photography is particularly exceptional, but because of what the images actually show. Although these pictures of Zulu people and their dwellings, which were made by a number of different European photographers, were taken with ethnographic purposes in mind, we were struck by the spirit, strength, and beauty that also come through in them. The show is so stimulating, in fact, that we kept wishing it were more of a public event. (Visitors need to stop by the information desk for a pass and directions. The collection is open Tuesdays through Fridays, from 10 to 4:30.) It is our hunch that the exhibition would appeal to a much wider audience than the one we suspect has seen these images so far. The attention to hair, for example, could inspire anyone who's been using haircuts as a means of personal expression—yesterday's punks or today's hip-hop artists.

SHORT LIST—ILSE BING, Houk Friedman, 1094 Madison Ave., at 82nd St. (through Feb. 29); **LYNNE COHEN,** P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway (through Feb. 8); **JED DEVINE,** Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. (through Feb. 8); **CARL GOLDHAGEN,** Esman, 575 Broadway (through Feb. 8); **HORST,** Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway (through Jan. 25); **MC DERMOTT & MC GOUGH,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 1); **SHEILA METZNER,** Danziger, 415 West Broadway (through Feb. 8) and International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; through Feb. 2); **FRAN SHALOM,** 55 Mercer Street Gallery (through Jan. 25); **GERARD TRAQUANDI** and **EUGÈNE ATGET,** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Feb. 15); **ULAY,** Baghoomian, 555 Broadway (through Feb. 1).

MUSIC

WHEN Jan DeGaetani died, in 1989, the world of music lost, too soon, a rarity: an original singer. A singer who can collaborate with composers, who can re-imagine old music so that listeners remember singer and song intertwined, who has a personal style and sound that are never confused with another's, may properly be called original, and DeGaetani was all of that. Who, in the age of Schwarzkopf and Fischer-Dieskau, would have thought of singing Hugo Wolf with half-sleepy, unstressed sensuality, coolly careful tuning, alto-flute beauty of tone?

Those qualities, along with general virtues of intelligence and musicianship and a quiet confidence that passion need not be displayed overtly for listeners to receive it, were the keys to almost all of the American mezzo's work. It is not a long, kaleidoscopic list of virtues, and she was no chameleon; like most of the greats, she had her own manner, a perhaps narrow one, but one through which she spoke the most various things, because she had the spirit to understand widely. Her cool precision and quiet beauty illuminated Schoenberg's wild fantasy in "Pierrot" unforgettably; bade the songs of Charles Ives shed their bluster and divulge their serenity; found the unforced purity of Stephen Foster and Schubert alike; haunted the ear with death's siren call in George Crumb's Lorca and Whitman settings. Will she be imitated? Of course; originals always are. Not as widely, we suspect, as Fischer-Dieskau, Callas, Chaliapin; DeGaetani's appeal and repertoire were more rarefied. But good singers who have come under her influence will emulate the aspects of her work and manner that speak to their own sensibilities; this is what "tradition" means in singing, and it is both lifeblood to the art and a kind of immortality for the singer.

On Thursday, January 23, five well-established young professional singers who studied with DeGaetani at one time or another will join some of the singer's longtime collaborators (including her husband, the oboist Philip West) in the first of three tribute concerts at Columbia University's Miller Theatre. (The other programs are to be given February 15 and March 12.) There will be Schubert, Fauré, Shostakovich, and Berlioz, and there will be five songs composed for DeGaetani which she learned during her final illness but did not live to perform. (The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Carnegie Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—DON GIOVANNI, with Marilyn Mims, Patricia Schuman, Ruth Ann Swenson, Gösta Winbergh, Samuel Ramey, and John Cheek; conducted by Christian Badea. (Jan. 20 at 8.)... With Carolyn James, Patricia Schuman, Young Ok Shin, Gösta Winbergh, Samuel Ramey, and Timothy Noble; Christian Badea. (Jan. 22 and Jan. 25 at 8.)... **L'ELISIR D'AMORE,** with Kathleen Battle, Luciano Pavarotti, Juan Pons, and Paul Plishka; Marcello Panni. (Jan. 21 at 8 and Jan. 25 at 1:30.)... **TURANDOT,** with Gwyneth Jones, Teresa Stratas, and Vladimir Popov; Nello Santi. (Jan. 23 and Jan. 28 at 8.)... **DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER,** with Janis Martin, Jon Fredric West, James Morris, and Paul Plishka; James Conlon. (Jan. 24 at 8.)... With Janis Martin, Gary Lakes, James Morris, and Matti Salminen; James Conlon. (Jan. 29 at 8.)... **FIDELIO,** with Hildegard Behrens, Sylvia McNair, Reiner Goldberg, and Matti Salminen; Christof Perick. (Jan. 27 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—At Avery Fisher Hall. Jan. 21 at 7:30: Leonard Slatkin conducts "Shadows: Four Dirge-Nocturnes for Orchestra," by Claude Baker; Mozart's C-Major Piano Concerto (K. 503), featuring Christian Zacharias; and Dvořák's Symphony No. 6.... ¶ Jan. 23-25 at 8 and Jan. 28 at 7:30: Charles Dutoit conducts Mozart's Symphony No. 17, Debussy's "Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune," de Falla's "Three-Cornered Hat," and Szymanowski's Second Violin Concerto (featuring Chantal Juillet).

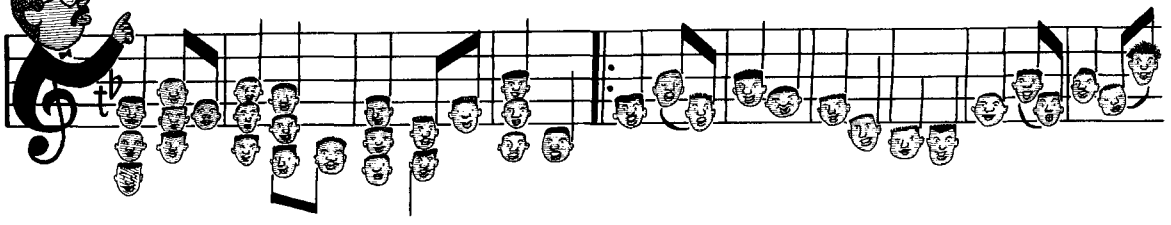
BOYS CHOIR OF HARLEM—Warren George Wilson directs Mozart's Requiem, featuring soprano Shirley Verrett, mezzo-soprano Hilda Harris, tenor Walter J. Turnbull (the choir's founder and musical director), and bass David Arnold. The concert also includes music by Scott Joplin, Fats Waller, and Duke Ellington, directed by Mr. Turnbull. A benefit concert. (Avery Fisher Hall. Jan 20 at 7.)

PARNASSUS AND THE NEW YORK VIRTUOSO SINGERS—The instrumental ensemble and the choir present music by Ravel, Schoenberg, Jacob Druckman, Miriam Gideon, Jonathan Harvey, and Anthony Korf. (Merkin Concert Hall. Jan. 22 at 8.)

GREENWICH VILLAGE SINGERS—Mark Mangini directs Bach's "Magnificat," Vivaldi's "Gloria," and a "Beatus Vir" by Monteverdi. (Fashion Institute of Technology, 227 W. 27th St. Jan. 24 at 8. For information about tickets, call 387-8048.)

COLLEGIATE CHORALE—Robert Bass directs the two-hundred-member choir in a fiftieth-anniversary celebration that includes music by Haydn, Mendelssohn, and Poulenc, as well as the *première* of William Bolcom's "Dancers" (which will feature soprano Martina Arroyo). Sopranos Harolyn Blackwell and Leona Mitchell, mezzo-soprano Mignon Dunn, and bass John Cheek will also make appearances, and the hundred and fifty members of the New York City Gay Men's Chorus are expected to somehow fit onstage to lend an added touch of grandeur to the "Triumphal Scene" from Verdi's "Aida." (Carnegie Hall. Jan. 25 at 8.)

JUILLIARD ORCHESTRA—André Previn conducts Vaughan Williams' Symphony No. 2 ("A London Symphony"), the New York premiere of Steven Stucky's "Son et Lumière," and Chopin's First Piano Concerto (with Jennifer Hayghe). (Avery Fisher Hall. Jan. 27 at 8.)



Boys Choir of Harlem

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"Mozart Masses in Concert"—The Michigan State University School of Music Chamber Orchestra and Chorale include in their program Mozart's C-Major Mass (the so-called "Credo" Mass, K. 257) and Symphony No. 39. (Alice Tully Hall. Jan. 27 at 8.)

Robert DeCormier Singers—The fourteen singers and a chamber orchestra present settings of the poetry of Robert Burns by Haydn, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Shostakovich, Paul Alan Levi, William Mayer, and Mr. DeCormier (who also directs the concert). (Merkin Concert Hall. Jan. 27 at 8.)

Orchestra of the Old Fairfield Academy—Thomas Crawford conducts the period-instrument ensemble in symphonies by two Haydns (No. 66 and No. 80 by Franz Joseph, and another by his brother Michael) and a Sinfonia Concertante by Johann Christian Bach (featuring violinist Linda Quan and cellist Myron Lutzke). Completing the program is Beethoven's Romance in F (with Ms. Quan as the soloist). (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. 921-2939. Jan. 28 at 8.)

RECITALS

Sharon Robinson and Samuel Sanders—The cellist and the pianist perform sonatas by Grieg and Shostakovich, Beethoven's "Variations on a Theme from Mozart's 'Magic Flute'" (WoO 46), and Rebecca Clarke's Rhapsody, written in 1923, seven years after the composer moved to America from her native England. A benefit concert. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Jan. 22 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 840-1101.)

Bargemusic—Presenting chamber music by Brahms, Fauré, and Marilyn Ziffrin. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Jan. 23 at 7:30 and Jan. 26 at 4.)

Jan DeGaetani Tribute—Disciples and colleagues of the late mezzo-soprano will pay tribute to their friend and mentor through a three-concert series this winter. The first features songs by Schubert, Fauré, Shostakovich, and Berlioz, performed by sopranos Renée Fleming, Carmen Pelton, and Pamela Coburn; mezzo-soprano Milagro Vargas; baritone William Sharp; and pianists Robert Spillman and Gilbert Kalish (Ms. DeGaetani's longtime musical collaborator). Also on the program is the première of five songs from a set of nine "Songs for Jan and Phil" (by Peter Maxwell Davies, Stanley Walden, Sydney Hodkinson, Jacob Druckman, and Arnold Black), performed here by Ms. Vargas and oboist/English hornist Philip West. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Jan. 23 at 8.)

Gil Shaham—The violinist performs the First Violin Sonatas of Beethoven (Op. 12), Saint-Saëns (Op. 75), and Prokofiev (Op. 80), as well as works by Wieniawski and Sarasate. Assisted by pianist Rohan De Silva. (Carnegie Hall. Jan. 23 at 8.)

New York Philomusica Chamber Ensemble—Performing a Haydn Divertimento; Tchaikovsky's Sextet, Op. 70 ("Souvenir of Florence"); and John Harbison's Piano Quintet. (Merkin Concert Hall. Jan. 23 at 8.)

Michala Petri and Kazuhito Yamashita—The recorder player and the guitarist perform sonatas by Handel and Telemann (both in A Minor), as well as works by Bach, Anton Heberle, and others. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Jan. 24 at 8.)

New York Chamber Ensemble—Stephen Rogers Radcliffe leads the group in "Three Tone Pictures" by Griffes, Barber's ballet "Medea," a septet by Ned Rorem, and the première of a piano concerto by David Korevaar (who will perform the solo part). (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Jan. 24 at 8.)

Alaria Ensemble—Presenting a Handel recorder sonata, a Beethoven cello sonata, a Haydn trio, nocturnes by Ernest Bloch, and a Romanza by David Loeb. (Weill Recital Hall. Jan. 24 at 8.)

Focus! 1992—A series featuring music composed in the United States during the most recent decade. Jan. 24 at 8: Music by Roberto Sierra, Leon Kirchner, John Harbison, Leonardo Balada, Elliott Carter, Joan Tower, Hale Smith, and Michael Daugherty. (Alice Tully Hall.). . . ¶ Jan. 26 at 8:30: Music by Chinary Ung, Jacob Druckman, Robert Erickson, and Richard Wilson. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St.). . . ¶ Jan. 28 at 7: A composers' roundtable, with Margaret Brouwer, David Lang, Tania León, John Musto, and Paul Schoenfield. (Juilliard Theatre.). . . ¶ Jan. 28 at 8: Music by Messrs. Lang and Musto, Ms. León, Ursula Mamlok, Muhal Richard Abrams, and David Diamond. Also on the program is a performance by the Juilliard Dancers of works choreographed by Laura Dean to music by Steve Reich. (Juilliard Theatre.). . . ¶ Jan. 29 at 8: A salute to John Cage, including three of his own compositions in addition to pieces by Morton Feldman, Pia Gilbert, Philip Corner, and Lou Harrison. (Juilliard Theatre.) (For information about free tickets, which are required for all events, call 769-7406.)

Tatiana Troyanos and Benita Valente

"Schubertiade"—At the 92nd Street Y. After a year's *relâche*, the Y resumes its exhaustive exploration of Schubert's life and works. Jan. 25: Baritone Hermann Prey and pianist Leonard Hokanson perform songs to texts by Goethe. . . . ¶ Jan. 28: A recital of chamber music in which the composer employed themes that had previously appeared in his lieder: the "Variations on 'Trockne Blumen'" (for flute and piano); the C-Major Fantasy (for violin and piano); the "Wanderer" Fantasy (for piano); and a movement from the "Death and the Maiden" String Quartet. Mr. Prey and Joseph Kalichstein perform the originals; the reworkings are entrusted to flutist Paula Robison, violinist György Pauk, Mr. Kalichstein, and the Tokyo String Quartet. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Evenings at 8.)

David Buechner—The pianist performs music by Gershwin (a solo setting of his Second Rhapsody) and works by Spanish and Latin American composers. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. Jan. 25 at 8. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

Tatiana Troyanos and Benita Valente—The mezzo-soprano and the soprano, assisted by pianist Warren Jones, perform songs, arias, and duets by Mahler, Mendelssohn, Dvořák, and others. (Alice Tully Hall. Jan. 26 at 3.)

Daniel Blumenthal—Pianist, performing Beethoven's D-Major Sonata (Op. 10, No. 3), Dukas's "Variations, Interlude, et Final sur un Thème de Rameau," and the first book of Debussy's Preludes. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Jan. 26 at 5.)

New York Festival of Song—Mezzo-soprano Luretta Bybee, tenor Peter Kazaras, and pianist Steven Blier perform Janáček's "The Diary of One Who Vanished," a song cycle in Valachian dialect—the composer envisioned it as a semi-staged duodrama—describing the elopement of a peasant boy and a gypsy girl. Also on the program are "gypsy songs" by Brahms, Dvořák, and others. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. 242-4770. Jan. 26 at 5.)

Chelsea Chamber Ensemble—Performing compositions from the nineteen-twenties by Piston, Poulenc, Stravinsky, and Samuel Gardner, as well as a new work by David Sampson. (Weill Recital Hall. Jan. 27 at 8.)

North/South Consonance—Max Lifchitz conducts the ensemble in a work of his own as well as in pieces by George Belden, Richard Nanes, and Aurelio de la Vega; with soprano Eva de la O. (Merkin Concert Hall. Jan. 28 at 8.)

Tokyo String Quartet—Performing chamber music by Mozart, with André Previn. (Alice Tully Hall. Jan. 29 at 8.)

New Music Consort—Presenting Carter's "Triple Duo," Davidovsky's "Simple Dances," Lydia Ayers' "Dangerous Places," Xenakis's "Okho," and the première of Arthur Weisberg's "Reflections." (Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Jan. 29 at 8. For information about tickets, call 362-0962.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Ozzy Osbourne—Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Jan. 24-25 at 8.

Liza Minnelli— Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Jan. 24-25 and Jan. 28-29 at 8. Through Feb. 1.

"Celtic Fiddles"—Kevin Burke, Johnny Cunningham, John Whelan, and others. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Jan. 25 at 8.)

Rod Stewart—Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Jan. 27-28 at 8.

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Rangers—Away until Feb. 5, when they face the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Islanders—Vs. the Toronto Maple Leafs, Jan. 23 at 7:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, Jan. 25 at 2:05.

Devils—Vs. the Detroit Red Wings, Jan. 25 at 7:35.

Knicks—Vs. the Indiana Pacers, Jan. 20 at 1. . . . ¶ Vs. the Washington Bullets, Jan. 29 at 7:30.

Nets—Vs. the Phoenix Suns, Jan. 22. . . . ¶ Vs. the Miami Heat, Jan. 24. (Game time, 7:30.) (The Knicks play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Devils and the Nets at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

RACING

Horses—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 12:30. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8 and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30.

CHAMPIONSHIP—FOOTBALL

Super Bowl XXVI—The Washington Redskins play the Buffalo Bills for the title in the Metrodome, in Minneapolis. Rah, Rah. Jan. 26 at 6, on CBS.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Flower Show—"And the spring comes slowly up this way," Coleridge wrote. He must have been thinking of the New York Botanical Garden's spring-flower show in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, which occurs every January to give New Yorkers a taste of things to come. (Bronx Park. 220-8777. Daily, except Mondays, 10 to 4. Through March 8.)

Stormy Weather—Al Roker, meteorologist, narrates the new show at the Hayden Planetarium, which includes simulations of thunderstorms, blizzards, tornadoes, and hurricanes, as well as approximations of what weather is like in space. For more information, call 769-5920.

Readings—Jan. 21 at 6: John Ash and Marjorie Welish read from their own poetry. (Donnell Library Auditorium, 20 W. 53rd St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Jan. 22 at 6:30: Keith Szarabajka reads a story by Christopher Tilghman and Fritz Weaver reads one by Peter Matthiessen. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.). . . ¶ Jan. 27 at 7:30: Jacques Dupin reads from his own poetry, in French, and Paul Auster reads the translation. (Dia Center for the Arts, 155 Mercer St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Jan. 29 at 7: Tatyana Tolstaya, Rebecca Stowe, and Susan Thames read from their own prose. (Brentano's, Fifth Ave. at 48th St. No tickets necessary.)

Panel Discussion—Robert Brustein, John Guare, Arthur Kopit, Wendy Wasserstein, and George C. Wolfe discuss contemporary American theatre. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Jan. 27 at 8.)

Walks—Sponsored by Adventure on a Shoestring: Jan. 26 at noon, in Murray Hill, and Jan. 26 at 3, in Chelsea. For reservations, call 265-2663. . . . ¶ Sponsored by Big Onion Walking Tours: Jan 26 at 1, in the Lower East Side and Chinatown. For reservations, call 439-1090.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

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	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 18.

EAST SIDE

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Black Robe" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Jan. 23: "Prospero's Books" (directed by Peter Greenaway), with John Gielgud. From Jan. 24: "Love Crimes" (Lizzie Borden), with Sean Young and Patrick Bergin.
Theatre 3: "Let Him Have It" (Peter Medak).
Theatre 4: "My Own Private Idaho" (†).
Theatre 5: "Until the End of the World" (Wim Wenders), with William Hurt.
Theatre 6: "Madame Bovary" (†).

PUBLIC THEATRE, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through Jan. 23: "Life on a String" (Chen Kaige; in Chinese).
From Jan. 24: "The Golden Coach" (1953, Jean Renoir), with Anna Magnani.

NEWMAN THEATRE, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through Jan. 23: "The Golden Coach" (1953, Jean Renoir), with Anna Magnani.
From Jan. 24: "Rocco and His Brothers" (1961, Luchino Visconti; in Italian), with Alain Delon.

MOVIELAND 8TH STREET TRIPLEX, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Freejack" (Geoff Murphy), with Emilio Estevez and Mick Jagger.
Theatre 2: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans.
Theatre 3: "Naked Lunch" (David Cronenberg), with Peter Weller, Judy Davis, Ian Holm, and Julian Sands.

LOEWS VILLAGE THEATRE VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "JFK" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Prince of Tides" (†).
Theatre 3: "High Heels" (Pedro Almodóvar, in Spanish).
Theatre 4: "The Prince of Tides" (†).
Theatre 5: "Bugsy" (†).
Theatre 6: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (†).
Theatre 7: "JFK" (†).

CINEMA VILLAGE 12TH STREET, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"Strangers in Good Company" (†).

VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†).
Theatre 2: "Rush" (†).
Theatre 3: "Antonia and Jane" (Beeban Kidron), with Imelda Staunton and Saskia Reeves.
Theatre 4: "Rush" (†).
Theatre 5: "Father of the Bride" (†).
Theatre 6: "Beauty and the Beast" (Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise), a Walt Disney animated film.
Theatre 7: "Paris Is Burning" (Jennie Livingston), a documentary; and "Young Soul Rebels" (Isaac Julien).

CINEMA VILLAGE 3RD AVENUE, between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
"The Station" (Sergio Rubini; in Italian), with Margherita Buy.

LOEWS 19TH STREET EAST 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Hook" (†).
Theatre 2: "Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson), with Omar Epps.
Theatre 3: "Meeting Venus" (István Szabó), with Glenn Close and Niels Arestrup.
Theatre 4: "Freejack" (Geoff Murphy), with Emilio Estevez and Mick Jagger.
Theatre 5: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans.
Theatre 6: Through Jan. 23: "The Addams Family" (Barry Sonnenfeld), with Anjelica Huston, Raul Julia, and Christopher Lloyd. From Jan. 24: "Love Crimes" (Lizzie Borden), with Sean Young and Patrick Bergin.

GRAMERCY, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Father of the Bride" (†).

BAY CINEMA, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Kuffs" (Bruce A. Evans), with Christian Slater, Tony Goldwyn, and Milla Jovovich.

MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†).
Theatre 3: "Rush" (†).
Theatre 4: "Bugsy" (†).

LOEWS 34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "JFK" (†).
Theatre 2: "Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson), with Omar Epps.
Theatre 3: "Freejack" (Geoff Murphy), with Emilio Estevez and Mick Jagger.

34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"The Prince of Tides" (†).

EASTSIDE CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"The Fisher King" (Terry Gilliam), with Robin Williams and Jeff Bridges.

SUTTON 1 AND 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Father of the Bride" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Jan. 23: "Father of the Bride" (†). From Jan. 24: "Love Crimes" (Lizzie Borden), with Sean Young and Patrick Bergin.

GOTHAM CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Grand Canyon" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Kline.

PLAZA, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Black Robe" (†).

MANHATTAN TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson), with Omar Epps.
Theatre 2: "Juice."

59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Boyz N the Hood" (John Singleton).

BARONET AND CORONET, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Fried Green Tomatoes" (Jon Avnet), with Kathy Bates, Jessica Tandy, Mary-Louise Parker, and Mary Stuart Masterson.
Theatre 2: "Hook" (†).

CINEMA I, CINEMA II, AND CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†).
Theatre 2: "Rush" (†).
Theatre 3: "Beauty and the Beast" (Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise), a Walt Disney animated film.

FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "My Girl" (Howard Zieff), with Dan Aykroyd, Jamie Lee Curtis, Macaulay Culkin, and Anna Chlumsky.
Theatre 2: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (†).
Theatre 3: "For the Boys" (Mark Rydell), with Bette Midler and James Caan.
Theatre 4: "Kuffs" (Bruce A. Evans), with Christian Slater, Tony Goldwyn, and Milla Jovovich.
Theatre 5: "Naked Lunch" (David Cronenberg), with Peter Weller, Judy Davis, Ian Holm, and Julian Sands.
Theatre 6: "Cape Fear" (†).

GEMINI 1 AND 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Bugsy" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans.

BEEKMAN, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"At Play in the Fields of the Lord" (†).

LOEWS NEW YORK TWIN, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Freejack" (Geoff Murphy), with Emilio Estevez and Mick Jagger.
Theatre 2: "The Prince of Tides" (†).

68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Hear My Song" (Peter Chelsom), with Ned Beatty, Adrian Dunbar, and Tara Fitzgerald.

LOEWS TOWER EAST, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"JFK" (†).

U. A. EAST, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson), with Omar Epps.

PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Cape Fear" (†).
Theatre 2: "Kuffs" (Bruce A. Evans), with Christian Slater, Tony Goldwyn, and Milla Jovovich.

LOEWS ORPHEUM VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Rush" (†).
Theatre 2: "Freejack" (Geoff Murphy), with Emilio Estevez and Mick Jagger.
Theatre 3: "Hook" (†).
Theatre 4: "Bugsy" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Prince of Tides" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Addams Family" (Barry Sonnenfeld), with Anjelica Huston, Raul Julia, and Christopher Lloyd
Theatre 7: Through Jan. 23: "The Prince of Tides" (†). From Jan. 24: "Love Crimes" (Lizzie Borden), with Sean Young and Patrick Bergin.

86TH STREET EAST TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Father of the Bride" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†).

WEST SIDE

FILM FORUM, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through Jan. 28: "Daughters of the Dust" (directed by Julie Dash). From Jan. 29: "Thank You and Goodnight!" (1990, Jan Oxenberg).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "35 Up" (Michael Apted), a documentary.

WAVERLY 1 AND 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Kuffs" (Bruce A. Evans), with Christian Slater.
Theatre 2: "Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson), with Omar Epps.

ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Cape Fear" (†).
Theatre 2: "Grand Canyon" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Kline.

QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse" (†).
Theatre 2: "Europa Europa" (Agnieszka Holland, in German and Russian), with Marco Hofschneider.
Theatre 3: "Life Is Sweet" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Jan. 23: "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" (1990, Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish). From Jan. 24: "Labyrinth of Passion" (1982, Almodóvar; in Spanish).

CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Cape Fear" (†).
Theatre 2: "Grand Canyon" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Kline.
Theatre 3: "Kuffs" (Bruce A. Evans), with Christian Slater, Tony Goldwyn, and Milla Jovovich.
Theatre 4: Through Jan. 23: "Grand Canyon." From Jan. 24: "Fried Green Tomatoes" (Jon Avnet), with Kathy Bates, Jessica Tandy, Mary-Louise Parker, and Mary Stuart Masterson.
Theatre 5: "JFK" (†).
Theatre 6: "Rush" (†).
Theatre 7: "Bugsy" (†).
Theatre 8: "The Prince of Tides" (†).
Theatre 9: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†).

23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (†).
Theatre 2: "Beauty and the Beast" (Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise), a Walt Disney animated film.
Theatre 3: "At Play in the Fields of the Lord" (†).

GUILD, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Beauty and the Beast" (Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise), a Walt Disney animated film.

WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Kuffs" (Bruce A. Evans), with Christian Slater, Tony Goldwyn, and Milla Jovovich.
Theatre 2: "My Own Private Idaho" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Fisher King" (Terry Gilliam), with Robin Williams and Jeff Bridges.
Theatre 4: "Let Him Have It" (Peter Medak).
Theatre 5: "Black Robe" (†).
Theatre 6: "My Girl" (Howard Zieff), with Dan Aykroyd, Jamie Lee Curtis, Macaulay Culkin, and Anna Chlumsky.

ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"The Prince of Tides" (†).

LOEWS FESTIVAL, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Until the End of the World" (Wim Wenders), with William Hurt.

57TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Naked Lunch" (David Cronenberg), with Peter Weller, Judy Davis, Ian Holm, and Julian Sands.

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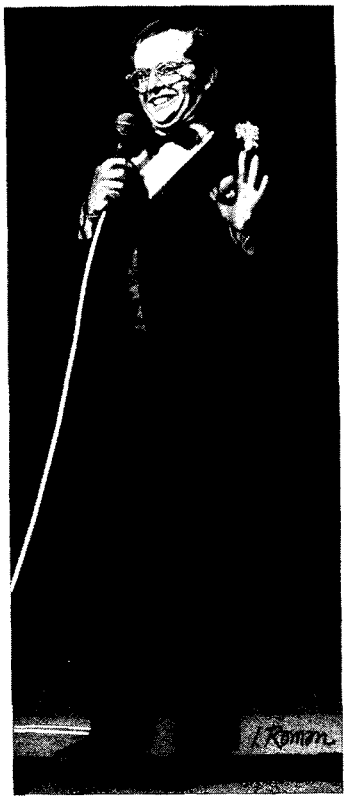

At Theatre 80 St. Marks, Jack Nicholson in "The King of Marvin Gardens"

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Madame Bovary" (†).
Theatre 2: "Madame Bovary" (†).

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
Through Jan. 23: "The Inner Circle" (Andrei Konchalovsky), with Tom Hulce.
From Jan. 24: "Kafka" (Steven Soderbergh), with Jeremy Irons, Theresa Russell, Joel Grey, Alec Guinness, Armin Mueller-Stahl, Ian Holm, and Jeroen Krabbé.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Meeting Venus" (István Szabó), with Glenn Close and Niels Arestrup.

Loews Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"JFK" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Grand Canyon" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Kline.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Rhapsody in August" (†).
Theatre 2: "High Heels" (Pedro Almodóvar, in Spanish).
Theatre 3: "The Double Life of Véronique" (Krzysztof Kieslowski, in French and Polish).

Beacon, B'way at 74th. (496-7070)
"At the Max" (Julien Temple), a concert film of the Rolling Stones.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"The Prince of Tides" (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans.
Theatre 2: "Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson), with Omar Epps.
Theatre 3: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†).
Theatre 4: "Freejack" (Geoff Murphy), with Emilio Estevez and Mick Jagger.
Theatre 5: "Hook" (†).
Theatre 6: "Bugsy" (†).

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Rush" (†).
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "Beauty and the Beast" (Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise), a Walt Disney animated film; and (evenings only) "Cape Fear" (†).

Olympia 1 and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Father of the Bride" (†).
Theatre 2: "Kuffs" (Bruce A. Evans), with Christian Slater.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Hook" (†).
Theatre 2: "Freejack" (directed by Geoff Murphy), with Emilio Estevez and Mick Jagger.
Theatre 3: "Bugsy" (†).
Theatre 4: "Rush" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans.
Theatre 6: Through Jan. 23: "Rush" (†) From Jan. 24: "Love Crimes" (Lizzie Borden), with Sean Young and Patrick Bergin.
Theatre 7: "The Last Boy Scout."

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (†).
Theatre 2: "Father of the Bride" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Addams Family" (Barry Sonnenfeld), with Anjelica Huston, Raul Julia, and Christopher Lloyd

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson), with Omar Epps.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Kuffs" (Bruce A. Evans), with Christian Slater, Tony Goldwyn, and Milla Jovovich.
Theatre 2: "Cape Fear" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
Jan. 20: "The Color of Money" (1986, directed by Martin Scorsese), with Paul Newman, Tom Cruise, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Helen Shaver; and "New York Stories" (1989, Woody Allen, Francis Coppola, and Scorsese).
Jan. 21: "GoodFellas" (Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro, Ray Liotta, Joe Pesci, Lorraine Bracco, and Paul Sorvino.
Jan. 22-28: "There's Nothing Out There" (Rolfe Kanefsky).
From Jan. 29: "Guilty as Charged" (Sam Irvin), with Rod Steiger and Lauren Hutton.

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Jan. 20: "College" (1927, James W. Horne), with Buster Keaton; and three short silent films with Keaton—"The High Sign" (1921), "The Scarecrow" (1920), and "The Goat" (1921).
Jan. 21: "The Passionate Plumber" (1932, Edward Sedgwick), with Buster Keaton and Jimmy Durante; and "The Lovable Cheat" (1949, Richard Oswald), with Charles Ruggles, Peggy Ann Garner, and Keaton.
Jan. 22: "Estrellados" (1930, Buster Keaton; in Spanish, with no English subtitles), with Keaton; and "The Buster Keaton Story" (1957, Sidney Sheldon), with Donald O'Connor.
Jan. 23-25: "Go West" (1925, Buster Keaton; silent), with Keaton; and three short films by and with Keaton—"The Love Nest" (1923), "The Blacksmith" (1922), and "The Paleface" (1921).
Jan. 26-28: "Battling Butler" (†); and "Speak Easily" (1932, Edward Sedgwick), with Buster Keaton and Jimmy Durante.
Jan. 29: "San Diego, I Love You" (1944, Reginald Le Borg), with Jon Hall, Louise Allbritton, and Buster Keaton; and "In the Good Old Summer Time" (1949, Robert Z. Leonard), with Judy Garland, Van Johnson, S. Z. Sakall, Spring Byington, and Keaton.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Jan. 20: "Red Desert" (1964, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian), with Monica Vitti and Richard Harris; and "Blow-Up" (1966, Antonioni), with Vanessa Redgrave and David Hemmings.
Jan. 21: "Home from the Hill" (1960, Vincente Minnelli), with Robert Mitchum, Eleanor Parker, George Hamilton, and George Peppard; and "The Night of the Hunter" (1955, Charles Laughton), with Mitchum, Shelley Winters, and Lillian Gish.
Jan. 22: "Targets" (1968, Peter Bogdanovich), with Tim O'Kelly and Boris Karloff; and "Paper Moon" (1973, Bogdanovich), with Ryan O'Neal and Tatum O'Neal.
Jan. 23: "Fury" (†); and "Scarlet Street" (1946, Fritz Lang), with Edward G. Robinson, Joan Bennett, and Dan Duryea.
Jan. 24-25: "Ninotchka" (1939, Ernst Lubitsch), with Greta Garbo, Melvyn Douglas, Ina Claire, Bela Lugosi, Felix Bresart, and Sig Rumann; and "Grand Hotel" (1932, Edmund Goulding), with Garbo, John Barrymore, Joan Crawford, and Wallace Beery.
Jan. 26: "The King of Marvin Gardens" (1972, Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson, Bruce Dern, and Ellen Burstyn; and "Head" (†).
Jan. 27: "Hiroshima, Mon Amour" (1959, Alain Resnais; in French), with Emmanuèle Riva and Eiji Okada; and "Muriel" (1963, Resnais; in French), with Delphine Seyrig.
Jan. 28: "Murder, My Sweet" (1945, Edward Dmytryk), with Claire Trevor, Dick Powell, Mike Mazurki, and Anne Shirley; and "The Brasher Doubloon" (1947, John Brahm), with George Montgomery.
Jan. 29: "Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?" (1967, Frank Tashlin), with Jayne Mansfield, Tony Randall, and Betsy Drake; and "Lord Love a Duck" (1966, George Axelrod), with Tuesday Weld, Roddy McDowall, Lola Albright, and Ruth Gordon.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Jan. 20 at 2 and Jan. 23 at 6: "Ninotchka" (1939, directed by Ernst Lubitsch), with Greta Garbo, Melvyn Douglas, Ina Claire, Bela Lugosi, Felix Bresart, and Sig Rumann. . . . ¶ Jan. 20 at 2: Two documentaries by William Greaves—"From These Roots" (1974) and "Booker T. Washington: The Life and Legacy" (1982). . . . ¶ Jan. 20 at 3:30: "King: A Filmed Record . . . Montgomery to Memphis" (1970, Ely Landau and Richard Kaplan), a documentary. . . . ¶ Jan. 20 at 5: "Trouble in Paradise" (1932, Lubitsch), with Miriam Hopkins, Herbert Marshall, and Kay Francis. . . . ¶ Jan. 21 at 2: "The Oyster Princess" (1919, Lubitsch; silent, with German intertitles) and "The Doll" (1919, Lubitsch; silent, with German intertitles). . . . ¶ Jan. 21 at 3 and 5: "Native Land" (1942, Leo Hurwitz and Paul Strand), a documentary. . . . ¶ Jan. 21 at 5: "Madame Du Barry" (1919, Lubitsch; silent), with Pola Negri, Emil Jannings, and Harry Liedtke. . . . ¶ Jan. 23 at 2:30: "Lady Windermere's Fan" (1925, Lubitsch; silent), with Ronald Colman, Irene Rich, and May McAvoy. . . . ¶ Jan. 23 at 3 and 6: "The Damned Dynasty" (1990, Dan Jelesco), a documentary. . . . ¶ Jan. 24 at 2:30 and Jan. 26 at 5: "Blue Steel" (1990, Kathryn Bigelow), with Jamie Lee Curtis and Ron Silver. . . . ¶ Jan. 24 at 6 and Jan. 26 at 2: "Fat City" (1972, John Huston), with Stacy Keach and Jeff Bridges. . . . ¶ Jan. 25 at 2 and Jan. 27 at 5: "The Doors" (1991, Oliver Stone), with Val Kilmer, Frank Whaley, Kevin Dillon, Meg Ryan, and Kyle MacLachlan. . . . ¶ Jan. 25 at 5: "Privilege" (1990, Yvonne Rainer), with Alice Spivak, Novella Nelson, and Blaire Baron. . . . ¶ Jan. 26 at 2:30: "The Sleeping Car Murders" (1965, Costa-Gavras; in French), with Yves Montand, Simone Signoret, and Michel Piccoli. . . . ¶ Jan. 26 at 5: "Alice Adams" (1935, George Stevens), with Katharine Hepburn, Fred MacMurray, Ann Shoemaker, Fred Stone, and Frank Albertson. . . . ¶ Jan. 27 at 2:30: "Kakita Akanishi" (1936, Mansaku Itami; in Japanese). . . . ¶ Jan. 27 at 6:30: A program of films by Emily Breer, who will be present. . . . ¶ Jan. 28 at 2:30: "Barfly" (†). . . . ¶ Jan. 28 at 6: "Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills" (1989, Paul Bartel), with Jacqueline Bisset, Ray Sharkey, and Ed Begley, Jr.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Jan. 20 at 2: "The Distant Journey" (1948, Alfred Radok; in Czech). . . . ¶ Jan. 20 and 26 at 4:30: "The Mission of Raoul Wallenberg" (1990, Alexander Rodnjanski; in Russian). . . . ¶ Jan. 20 at 6:45, Jan. 21 at 2, and Jan. 26 at 9: "Daniel Takes a Train" (1983, Sandor Pal; in Hungarian). . . . ¶ Jan. 20 at 9 and Jan. 21 at 4:30: "Photographs" (1990, Edit Koszegi, Sandor Simo, and Andras Suranyi; in Hungarian). . . . ¶ Jan. 21 at 6:45, Jan. 22 at 2, and Jan. 26 at 2: "I Am Sitting on a Branch and I Am Fine" (1989, Juraj Jakubisko; in Czech). . . . ¶ Jan. 21 at 9 and Jan. 22 at 4:30: "Interpretation of Dreams" (1991, Andrei Zagdansky; in Russian) and "Private History" (1976, Gabor Body and Peter Timar; in Hungarian). . . . ¶ Jan. 22-23 at 6:45 and Jan. 25 at 9:30: "Forbidden Dreams" (1986, Karel Kachyna; in Czech). . . . ¶ Jan. 22 at 9, Jan. 23 at 4:30, and Jan. 26 at 6:45: "Sunset" (1990, Alexander Zeldovich; in Russian). . . . ¶ Jan. 23 at 2 and 9 and Jan. 25 at 7:30: "March Caresses" (1989, Radoslaw Piwowarski; in Polish). . . . ¶ Jan. 24 at 2 and Jan. 25 at 3:45: "Heroes for Sale" (1933,

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MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

William Wellman), with Richard Barthelmess. . . . ¶ Jan. 24 at 3:45 and Jan. 27 at 8:45: "My Man Godfrey" (1936, Gregory La Cava), with Carole Lombard, William Powell, Mischa Auer, and Alice Brady. . . . ¶ Jan. 24 at 5:45 and Jan. 27 at 2: "I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang" (†). . . . ¶ Jan. 24 at 7:45 and Jan. 25 at 5:30: "Pepi, Luci, Bom and Other Girls on the Heap" (1980, Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish). . . . ¶ Jan. 24 at 9:45 and Jan. 25 at 2: "The Bellhop" (1960, Jerry Lewis), with Lewis. . . . ¶ Jan. 27 at 4 and Jan. 29 at 8:30: "The Three of Us" (1984, Pupi Avati; in Italian). . . . ¶ Jan. 27 at 6:30 and Jan. 28 at 4:15: "The Devil's Playground" (†). . . . ¶ Jan. 28 at 2 and Jan. 29 at 4:15: "Love on the Dole" (1941, John Baxter), with George Carney and Deborah Kerr. . . . ¶ Jan. 28 at 6:30 and Jan. 29 at 2: "The Diary of a Country Priest" (see page 21). . . . ¶ Jan. 28 at 9: "Caged Heat" (1974, Jonathan Demme). . . . ¶ Jan. 29 at 6:30: "The Lost Son" (1934, Luis Trenker).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—Jan. 25 at 2: "The Brood" (1979, David Cronenberg), with Oliver Reed and Samantha Eggar. . . . ¶ Jan. 25 at 5: "Fast Company" (1979, Cronenberg), with William Smith, Claudia Jennings, and John Saxon. . . . ¶ Jan. 26 at 2:30: "Videodrome" (1982, Cronenberg), with James Woods and Deborah Harry. . . . ¶ Jan. 26 at 4:30: "Scanners" (1980, Cronenberg), with Jennifer O'Neill, Stephen Lack, and Patrick McGoohan.

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. (1-718 783-6501)—Jan. 25 at 2: "La Terra Trema" (1947, Luchino Visconti; in Sicilian dialect). . . . ¶ Jan. 26 at 2: "Ossessione" (1942, Visconti; in Italian), with Clara Calamai and Massimo Girotti.

Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium, 42nd St. at First Ave.—Jan. 24 at 6:30: "The Shiinomi School" (1955, Hiroshi Shimizu; in Japanese) and "A Star Athlete" (1937, Shimizu; in Japanese). (For information about tickets, call 752-0824.)

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—"From Object to Subject: Documents and Documentaries from the Women's Movement." Jan. 21 at 2: "The Emerging Woman" (1974, Women's Film Project), "Antonia: A Portrait of the Woman" (1974, Judy Collins and Jill Godmilow), and "Union Maids" (1975, Julia Reichert, James Klein, and Miles Mogulescu). . . . ¶ Jan. 21 at 6:10 and Jan. 22 at 2: "Dyketactics" (1974, Barbara Hammer) and "The Amazon Festival" (1977, Santa Cruz Women's Media Collective). . . . ¶ Jan. 23 at 2: "Women's Lib" (1970, People's Video Theatre), "Politics of Intimacy" (1973, Julie Gustafson), "Another Look, Parts 1 and 2" (1972, Women's Video News Service), and "The Fifth Street Women's Building Film" (1971, Jane Lurie). . . . ¶ Jan. 24–25 at 2: "Janie's Janie" (1971, Geri Ashur and Peter Barton), "Harriett" (1973, Nancy Cain), "Chris & Bernie" (1975, Deborah Shaffer and Bonnie Friedman), and "In the Best Interests of the Children" (1977, Iris Film Collective.)

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—A Dennis Potter retrospective. Jan. 23 at 5:30, Jan. 24 at 6, and Jan. 25-26 at 2:30: "Stand Up, Nigel Barton" (1965, BBC), with Keith Barron and Jack Woolgar; and "Vote, Vote, Vote for Nigel Barton" (1965, BBC), with Keith Barron, Valerie Gearon, and John Bailey.

IN BRIEF

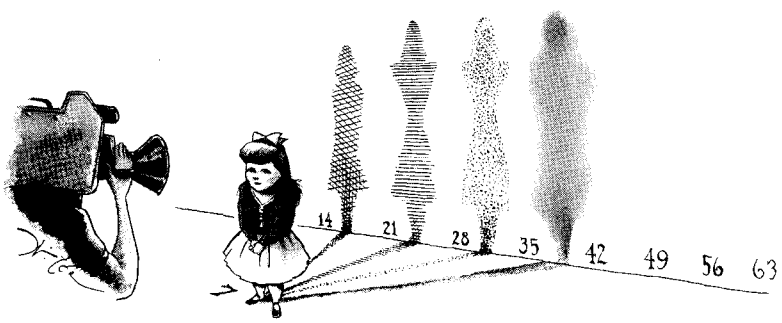
SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

At Play in the Fields of the Lord—Hector Babenco's film, which is based on Peter Matthiessen's 1965 novel of the same name, feels lifeless right from the start, and it perks up only occasionally in the course of the three hours and ten minutes it takes to tell its story. The movie is set in the Amazon basin, and it's about the destruction of an Indian tribe by a combination of capitalist greed (in the form of the local authorities) and cultural insensitivity (in the form of Protestant missionaries from America). Matthiessen's epic may have held some surprises for its mid-sixties readers, but its ideas have since lost a lot of their power and all their freshness. The dramatic conflicts aren't very complex, and most of the characters are one-dimensional, instantly readable. Yet Babenco treats every scene as if it contained infinite riches: he draws out simple actions, reiterates obvious ideas, lingers on the faces of characters who have no more secrets to yield up. Among the actors—a high-powered group that includes John Lithgow, Tom Berenger, Kathy Bates, and Daryl Hannah—only Aidan Quinn, as a young missionary who learns to respect the Indians' culture, comes through at all. An air of fatigue and defeat pervades the picture. The effort that Babenco and his actors have put into dramatizing this material is heartbreakingly apparent, yet, no matter how hard they work, the scenes refuse to play, and the movie never manages to generate any real momentum. It's an honest, well-intentioned flop. Screenplay by Babenco and Jean-Claude Carrière.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/16/91.) (Beekman, and 23rd St. West Triplex.)

Barfly (1987)—The sixty-seven-year-old L.A. poet Charles Bukowski wrote this semi-autobiographical script about his heavy-drinking skid-row days just after the Second World War, when he was a scrappy young man, in his mid to late twenties—a budding writer who was beginning to be published. But Mickey Rourke, who plays the role, imitates the tortoise movements of the battle-scarred survivor Bukowski, the writer-philosopher, the sage. This howler gives the movie a comic boost. Rourke twinkles with amusement at doing Bukowski, and the two principal women (Faye Dunaway as a burned-out drinker, Alice Krige as the wealthy publisher of a literary magazine) twinkle back. The movie, though, is big on life affirmation. The hero isn't afraid to lose a fight or to hit bottom. And he isn't tempted by security. Offered the guesthouse on the publisher's estate, he snubs her; he calls her world "a cage with golden bars." (Of course, she's infatuated with his integrity.) Waking in her bed, he gets up saying, "I belong on the streets. I don't feel right here. It's like I can't *breathe*!" He goes back to his grimy haunts, where—we're supposed to believe—the real people are. This might be a film about the leader of a religious cult which was made by an altar boy. The director, Barbet Schroeder, wanting to please the Master, inadvertently exposes Bukowski's messianic-windbag sensibility at its most self-satisfied. You wouldn't guess at Bukowski's talent from this movie. With Frank Stallone, J. C. Quinn, Jack Nance, and Fritz Feld. Cinematography by Robby Müller.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Jan. 28.)

Battling Butler (1926)—Rarely seen Buster Keaton film that he sometimes said was his favorite but that is probably no one else's favorite; the story is slight enough to hang gags on (including a famous duck shoot), but there's some discomfort—almost masochism—built into it. Keaton plays puny, defenseless Alfy Butler, a rich, soft simpleton whose father sends him into the woods to make a man of him; through love (for broad-faced Sally O'Neil) and mistaken identity, he becomes embroiled in prizefighting and is pitted against the sadistic world champion. He wins, of course, but not until after he's taken a cruel beating. Keaton directed, and there are cleverly worked out compositional techniques, including the sort of deep focus that was later to be associated with Orson Welles and Gregg Toland. With Snitz Edwards as the valet. Silent.—P.K. (*Film Forum 2*; Jan. 26-28.)



At Film Forum, "35 Up"

Black Robe—An unusual and absorbing new film about North American Indians and a French Jesuit missionary in the early seventeenth century. It's a culture-clash drama in which the most important conflicts take place in the realm of the spirit. The main characters are an excruciatingly pious young priest called Father Laforgue (Lothaire Bluteau) and an Algonquian chief named Chomina (August Schellenberg). Their world views are so radically opposed that at times the two men seem unable to acknowledge each other as human. The screenwriter, Brian Moore, and the director, Bruce Beresford, show extraordinary respect for the stubborn, almost impenetrable otherness of their historical characters. The film is an adventure story in the truest sense: the filmmakers lead us into unknown territory, and keep pushing us farther and farther on, until, by the end, we find ourselves deep in the wilderness of the seventeenth-century consciousness. Bluteau's performance is enervated, but the script is superbly intelligent, the direction is confident, and Schellenberg's Chomina is magnificent. The picture moves on a steady, powerful flow of ideas and emotions, and it stirs in us a sense of discovery. Based on Moore's 1985 novel of the same name. Also with Aden Young, Sandrine Holt, and Tantoo Cardinal. Cinematography by Peter James.—T.R. (11/18/91) (Angelika Film Center, Plaza, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

Bugsy—This opulent period gangster movie, written by James Toback and directed by Barry Levinson, is largely a showcase for the old-fashioned star magnetism of Warren Beatty, who plays the legendary Benjamin (Bugsy) Siegel. The screenplay portrays Bugsy as a charming, mercurial psychopath with a rather touching taste for glamour; it concentrates on the last few years of the hero's life, when he became a Hollywood celebrity and built the first hotel-casino in Las Vegas. He's a vivid, unpredictable, one-of-a-kind guy, and the filmmakers seem to realize that they can't take their eyes off him for a second. Siegel is a fascinating monster; we don't want to take our eyes off him, either. This is a rich role for Beatty, and he tears into it hungrily. It's the best kind of star performance: Beatty seems entirely himself, but in a new way. He's ferociously, mesmerizingly funny. Annette Bening plays Bugsy's lover, the tough, wily, independent-minded mob courtesan Virginia Hill, and she more than holds her own in her scenes with the star. And the movie is filled with pungent, memorable supporting performances. Ben Kingsley brings a surprisingly dry, elegant sense of comic timing to his portrait of sober Meyer Lansky (one of the hero's partners in the New York mob). Harvey Keitel, as Mickey Cohen, Bugsy's right-hand man in Los Angeles, spits out his profane lines as if they were live firecrackers. Elliott Gould plays the tiny role of Harry Greenberg, an aging, flabby mob schlemiel, and he's absolutely inspired; he plays this dazed character as a Willy Loman who has wandered too far from

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the old territory. Despite its lavish surface, this is essentially a movie of small, lovingly crafted pleasures. It's smart, swanky fun.—T.R. (12/30/91) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gemini, Loews Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Cape Fear—Martin Scorsese's new film is a remake of a bluntly effective 1962 thriller about a middle-class family—husband, wife, teen-age daughter—who are terrorized by a devious, implacable psychopath. The original (which was based on a pulp novel by John D. MacDonald and directed by J. Lee Thompson) had the straight-ahead construction of a horror movie, and it never pretended that what it was doing was good for us. The remake muddies the waters with self-consciousness: Scorsese and the screenwriter, Wesley Strick, have loaded the movie with apparent moral ambiguities, facile ideas about guilt and redemption, and explicit attempts to portray the scuzzy villain as a mythic nemesis. This picture is much flashier and more assaultive than the original. But the Christian/mythological subtext that Scorsese dredges up and places in the foreground has the effect of increasing our emotional distance from the story. Besides, it isn't true subtext; it's stuff that has been imposed on, rather than discovered in, the material. This is still, at heart, a picture whose sole aim is to give its audience huge, bowel-loosening shocks; the veneer of moral seriousness and psychological complexity that Scorsese brings to the enterprise feels like an attempt to convince himself that he's not doing what he's doing. This is Scorsese's worst picture—an ugly, incoherent piece of work. With Robert De Niro (frenetic but thoroughly uninteresting as the villain), Nick Nolte, Jessica Lange, Juliette Lewis, and Illeana Douglas. Joe Don Baker, playing the small part of a private detective, gives the liveliest performance; he's so good that you wish he were playing De Niro's role. The stars of the 1962 version, Robert Mitchum and Gregory Peck, make brief appearances, and the score is a reorchestration of Bernard Herrmann's original music.—T.R. (12/2/91) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and National Twin. . . . ¶ Metro Cinema. Evenings only.)

The Devil's Playground (1976)—The Marist Brothers at the Catholic seminary around which most of the film is set seem to be looking into themselves, puzzled and deeply disappointed by their own physicality. And the pubescent boys gaze with thunderstruck eyes at the eruptions of their bodies. This semi-autobiographical first feature by the Australian writer-director Fred Schepisi is always on the borderline of comedy, because they have all—monks and seminarians alike—been taught that "an undisciplined mind is the Devil's playground," yet they can't get their minds off their bodies. This isn't an anti-Catholic movie. Far from it. Schepisi loves these tormented comedians. But he looks at them with humorous pagan eyes. His passionate feelings are expressed visually—in his thematic use of water imagery and in the vibrancy of his color, which eroticizes the environment. He's a great filmmaker, with his own softly rhythmed style. You feel he's got the whole thing right. With the novelist Thomas Keneally as the bald and bewhiskered Father Marshall, Arthur Dignam as Brother Francine, who dreams of being underwater, surrounded by beautiful naked nymphs, and Nick Tate as Brother Victor, who goes into the city wearing civvies, picks up two women and flirts and teases right up to the verge of actual sex, and then escapes, gasping "They nearly had me."—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; Jan. 27-28.)

Father of the Bride—This scene-by-scene remake, with Steve Martin in the Spencer Tracy role of the father racking up debts to give his daughter a big marital sendoff, is less credible and crunchy than the 1950 Vincente Minnelli production. The story was always just a mildly satirical ode to middle-class patriarchy and the idea of Daddy's Little Girl (Elizabeth Taylor then, Kimberly Williams now). But Minnelli knew how to use Tracy's weathered mug and stout, combative stance to get laughs and to suggest real experience. The old movie has a plush-covered deadpan. The Disney/Touchstone update, by the team of Charles Shyer and Nancy Meyers (he directs, they co-wrote), is sappier and sillier. Martin doesn't only play straight, he plays square. (For those who loved him in "Parenthood," here's "Daddyhood.") He turns into a scowler, while Diane Keaton, as his wife, is a beamer. She switches from high beams to low beams, and sometimes gets stuck in between. The Shyer/Meyers additions explain or fudge the retro material: Martin is a conservative sneaker manufacturer who brags that his town hasn't changed in twenty-five years; Williams shoots hoops and vows that she won't become a fifties housewife. Still, the movie peddles expensive nostalgia. Martin's character ends up spending two hundred and fifty dollars a head for hundreds of wedding guests and believing it's the right thing to do. Clips from this version could pop up in commercials for "international" instant coffees—the ones urging viewers to "celebrate the moments of your life." Martin Short is surprisingly wearisome as a wedding coordinator.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Gramercy, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, Olympia, and Embassy.)

Fury (1936)—When this melodrama about an orgy of mob violence against an innocent man—it was Fritz Lang's first American movie—opened in London, Graham Greene said in his review that it was "the only film I know to which I have wanted to attach the epithet of 'great.'" Though Americans may rate it high, they are unlikely to go that far. Spencer Tracy (as the victim) and Sylvia Sidney are very fine, and the picture has so much vitality that it's easy to make allowances for the tacky ending, which doesn't jibe with Lang's sensibility and style. But the sensibility and style are themselves hurdles. The schematic view of fate, the lighting and design, the stylized movements of the lynchers all relate to the theatrical wing of the German Expressionist movement; Lang brings a heavy battery of advanced stagecraft to the small-town American Southern setting. Joseph L. Mankiewicz produced; Norman Krasna did the story; Bartlett Cormack and Lang did the screenplay. With Edward Ellis, Walter Brennan, Bruce Cabot, Frank Albertson, and Walter Abel. Cinematography by Joseph Ruttenberg.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Jan. 23.)

The Hand That Rocks the Cradle—This vengeful-nanny thriller has a catchy ad campaign: "Trust is her weapon. Innocence her opportunity. Revenge her only desire." The filmmakers, too, go after the trusting and innocent, but their desire is to make a killing at the box office. The twenty-eight-year-old screenwriter, Amanda Silver, spells out everything as if for the intelligence-impaired. Annabella Sciorra plays Claire, a devoted wife, mother, and, yes, botanist who blows the whistle on a lascivious gynecologist, catalyzing his suicide. Rebecca De Mornay is Peyton, the bad doctor's widow, who loses her own child and lies her way into Claire's nursery. And Ernie Hudson is the heroic, mentally challenged handyman who is wise with children: his name, of course, is Solomon. (Claire's husband, Michael, played by Matt McCoy, is a nonentity.) The director, Curtis Hanson, made two sharp, original suspense movies, "The Bedroom Window" (which he also wrote) and "Bad Influence," and scripted a third, "The Silent Partner." Here, Silver supplies the control board and Hanson just pushes the buttons. With its banal, docile household threatened by an enemy within, the film is like "The Stepfather" without wit or irony. De Mornay's Peyton gets off one campy verbal swipe at Solomon that's sure to be a favorite at high-school study halls, but Julianne Moore, as Michael's first love and Claire's friend, gives the performance of the movie. She's coiled and out there, like an exposed spring. She's also funny; she makes spikiness likable.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse—Fax Bahr and George Hickenlooper directed this engulfing, brilliantly crafted documentary about the disaster-strewn production of Francis Ford Coppola's "Apocalypse Now." But much of the credit should go to Eleanor Coppola, Francis's wife, who shot sixty hours of behind-the-scenes footage on location in the Philippines, caught her husband's haywire visionary mood swings on audiotape, and, in addition to joining the ranks of the interviewees, reads portions of her journal,

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IN BRIEF–Cont'd

"Notes." Her camerawork and prose have an unadorned limpidity. They provide refreshing counterpoint to the grandiose rhetoric of her husband's attempt to relocate Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" in a Vietnam War adventure story. Bahr and Hickenlooper present the extraordinary spectacle of a filmmaker at the peak of his clout, banking everything on his ability to pull inspiration out of the fire, and getting scorched. While enduring the dismissal of one lead actor, the heart attack of his replacement, a ruinous typhoon, and a constant struggle with the script, Coppola keeps insisting that his experiences will enrich his movie. Bahr and Hickenlooper support Coppola's point of view. Their film is less important for its debatable conclusion (that Coppola achieved artistic success) than for its depiction of the delusionary power of filmmaking. This movie, not "Apocalypse Now," is about what happened to Coppola in the jungle, and here he becomes a spellbinding tragic hero.—M.S. (Quad Cinema.)

HEAD (1968)—Before the producer, Bert Schneider, and the director, Bob Rafelson, collaborated on "Five Easy Pieces," they had made their names on TV with "The Monkees," and this first film they did together was an attempt to do for the Monkees what Richard Lester's "A Hard Day's Night" had done for the Beatles. The film tosses in old jokes, blackout routines, documentary footage of the suffering and horror of war, plus the Monkees, and tries to sell it all as a mind-blowing, psychedelic collage. With Annette Funicello, Timothy Carey, and Abraham Sofaer. Written by Rafelson and Jack Nicholson.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Jan. 26.)

HOOK—Steven Spielberg's film means to give a contemporary spin to J. M. Barrie's classic "Peter Pan." The movie is a failure in almost every way, but it's unmistakably of our time: its lack of conviction and its panicky eagerness to please are depressingly up-to-the-minute. The script, by Jim V. Hart and Malia Scotch Marmo, presents Peter Pan as a grown-up American family man named Peter Banning (Robin Williams). Banning, a yuppie corporate lawyer, has no idea that he was ever Peter Pan, and he's so wrapped up in making money that he neglects his wife and kids. The movie contrives to send him back to Neverland, where he rediscovers his former identity and does battle with his old nemesis, Captain Hook (Dustin Hoffman). The filmmakers seem unable (or unwilling) to keep their mind on the business of telling a rousing, fantastic adventure. They use up their energy and our patience in scattershot attempts to appeal to every conceivable audience. The whole sorry spectacle turns out to be a kind of self-help fairy tale, an illustrated lecture on finding the inner child. The picture is full of special-effects "magic," but the tricks feel strained; we're constantly aware of the anxiety and the backbreaking effort it's taking to produce them, and that's no kind of magic at all. Spielberg's inventiveness has a desperate quality here; the movie seems drenched in flop sweat. In this version of "Peter Pan," the imagination feels like a burden—a terrible, crushing obligation. Also with Maggie Smith, Julia Roberts, Bob Hoskins, Dante Basco, Caroline Goodall, Charlie Korsmo, and Amber Scott. The running time is two hours and fifteen minutes.—T.R. (12/30/91) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Coronet, Loews Orpheum VII, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

I AM A FUGITIVE FROM A CHAIN GANG (1932)—One of the best of the social-protest films—naïve, heavy, artless, but a straightforward, unadorned story with moments that haunted a generation, such as the hungry hero (Paul Muni) trying to pawn his *Croix de Guerre*. And there is one of the great closing scenes in the history of film: the hero is asked how he lives and he answers "I steal." Those involved in making the movie hoped it might help to ameliorate the condition of convicts, but it did more to ameliorate financial conditions at Warners and was a factor in making it the "socially conscious" studio. With Glenda Farrell, Helen Vinson, Preston Foster, Edward Ellis, Allen Jenkins, and Berton Churchill. Directed by Mervyn LeRoy, from an autobiographical story by Robert E. Burns.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; Jan. 24 and 27.)

JFK—Oliver Stone's movie means to demonstrate that the assassination of John F. Kennedy was not the act of a disturbed Marxist loner named Lee Harvey Oswald but the result of a vast, complex right-wing conspiracy. The screenplay, by Stone and Zachary Sklar, packs an extraordinary amount of assassination lore into three hours and eight minutes; it also includes a ton of speculative material about governmental misconduct, and

At the Walter Reade Theatre, "Love on the Dole"

quite a few invented characters. The movie is a thick gumbo of truths, half-truths, unverifiable hypotheses, and pure rant, and Stone ladles it out indiscriminately. In essence, the conspiracy theory argued here amounts to a series of inferential leaps proceeding from a speculation (that J.F.K. was killed because he wanted to pull out of Vietnam and end the Cold War). It's all bombast and misdirection, like a courtroom summation by a lawyer who knows that he can't win on the evidence. Stone comes on like a fearless radical, but his attitude toward the audience is firmly in the Hollywood tradition: he tries to bypass the intellect and go straight for the gut. The picture has the frenzied tone of tabloid television; it plays like an endless episode of "America's Most Wanted." Its hysterical manner and its slipshod handling of the facts actually have the effect of diminishing the credibility of the case for conspiracy. The movie finally seems as muddled and as hastily thrown together as the Warren Commission Report. The clearest sounds we hear in this picture are those of Oliver Stone shooting himself in the foot. With Kevin Costner as New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison, Sissy Spacek as his wife, Gary Oldman as Oswald, and an all-star cast of witnesses and conspirators: Tommy Lee Jones, Joe Pesci (an abominable performance), Donald Sutherland, Kevin Bacon, Jack Lemmon, Ed Asner, John Candy, Walter Matthau. Garrison himself does a brief turn as Chief Justice Warren.—T.R. (1/13/92) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews Tower East, Chelsea Cinemas, and Loews Columbus Circle.)

LIFE IS SWEET—In this wonderful new comedy, the English writer and director Mike Leigh ("High Hopes") takes us into the domestic life of a lower-middle-class family in Middlesex. The characters are, by conventional standards, ordinary, but they aren't dreary, and their actions aren't predictable; the movie doesn't treat anyone as a type. Wendy (Alison Steadman) is an attractive, ebullient middle-aged woman who's always on the move, always doing something. Her husband, Andy (Jim Broadbent), is an amiable dawdler, a guy who starts ambitious home-improvement projects and never quite gets around to finishing them. They're the parents of a ludicrously mismatched set of twins: Natalie (Claire Skinner), a quiet, serious, dignified girl; and Nicola (Jane Horrocks), who hates her life and responds with snarls and contemptuous epithets to even the most innocuous attempts at conversation. Leigh doesn't give us an obvious narrative hook—a clear sense of what the story is going to be about or what sort of dramatic revelations he might have in store for us. And, despite Nicola's bratty outbursts, the tone is light and casual. Leigh doesn't manipulate our responses; he roughs them up a little, though. By means of a dense texture of tiny behavioral details and disconcerting shifts of style, he attempts to reshuffle our emotions. He prepares us to accept the moments of piercing, almost miraculous clarity that arise, as if by accident, at the end of his best films. In this picture, he builds up to a conversation between Wendy and Nicola that is perhaps the most extraordinary scene in recent movies. Also with Stephen Rea and Timothy Spall.—T.R. (11/4/91) (Quad Cinema.)

MADAME BOVARY—Calling writer-director Claude Chabrol's adaptation of the Flaubert classic Masterpiece Theatre-style moviemaking is unfair to *Masterpiece Theatre*: the BBC miniseries starring Francesca Annis and Tom Conti had more humor, grit, and oomph. This is the Classics Illustrated comic-book version. In two hours and eight minutes, it trots through the central plot, conveying key dialogue, descriptions, and contrasts in linked vignettes and verbal bits that would fit into thought balloons. A narrator captions what the adapter fails to picture or dramatize. Isabelle Huppert is disastrous casting in the title role. Flaubert divulged Emma Bovary's oscillations via her eyes, but Huppert's less-than-divine orbs remain impassive even when she's supposed to be galvanizing. At one point, the narrator emphasizes the "hellish recklessness" and sensuality in Emma's gaze as she tries to compel her lover Leon (Lucas Belvaux) into committing embezzlement. Yet all we see is Huppert glaring at him with mercenary intent. It's as if Chabrol were banking that viewers will disregard the evidence of their own eyes. With Jean-François Balmer as Charles Bovary, Christophe Malavoy as Rodolphe Boulanger, and Jean Yanne as Monsieur Homais. In French.—M.S. (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

MY OWN PRIVATE IDAHO—This new feature by the independent filmmaker Gus Van Sant is like an exploded version of his previous films "Mala Noche" and "Drugstore Cowboy," and it scatters meanings all over the landscape. It's a beautiful disaster, like a bomb test in the middle of nowhere. The movie is set primarily in Van Sant's familiar territory—the seedier parts of Portland, Oregon—and its main characters are a pair of young hustlers, Mike (River Phoenix) and Scott (Keanu Reeves), who sell their bodies on the street. Mike is a narcoleptic: every time he blacks out, he has lyrical dreams composed of imagery from his childhood. Scott, who is the son of Portland's mayor, is modelled on Shakespeare's Prince Hal; the Falstaff character here is a scruffy gay cokehead called Bob (William Richert), and his scenes with Scott are stylized variations of incidents from both parts of "Henry IV" (hence also variations on Orson Welles' "Chimes at Midnight"). Van Sant takes a lot of chances, and visually the movie is so imaginative, so fiercely alive, that it carries us along. But when the over-all design of the picture becomes clear, we feel cheated rather than enlightened. Scott turns into a villain; Bob is ennobled as a symbol of outlaw freedom; and Mike takes on the aura of a holy fool, the Prince Myshkin of the Portland meat market. Van Sant's vision is disappointingly trite and schematic. Phoenix, however, gives a remarkably intelligent and intuitive performance. The original screenplay is by Van Sant. Eric Alan Edwards and John Campbell did the cinematography.—T.R. (10/7/91) (Angelika Film Center, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

THE PRINCE OF TIDES—With Barbra Streisand, Nick Nolte, and Blythe Danner; directed by Streisand. (Reviewed in this isue.) (Loews Village Theatre VII, 34th St. East, Loews

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New York Twin, Loews Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Regency.)

Rhapsody in August—These days, people are more interested in Kurosawa than he is in being Kurosawa. With this weak, tepid brew of message movie and family drama, the sensei moves further away than ever from his trademark imagistic energy toward the contemplative style of previous Japanese masters. (Even the title recalls Ozu.) In this tri-generational story, four children vacation with their grandmother (Sachiko Murase) in the country outside Nagasaki while their parents visit a granduncle and his half-American son (Richard Gere), in Hawaii. Kurosawa shows none of Ozu's ability to particularize and intensify domestic happiness and heartbreak. The few memorable shots come when the kids, weaned from television, see nature through the poetry of their grandmother's household lore. When they become obsessed with the Nagasaki A-bomb, which killed their grandfather, everything turns preachy and disingenuous. (Even American college T-shirts take on an editorial slant.) Gere plays a Yankee who speaks Japanese and empathizes with his Asian relatives. Kurosawa wants to transcend anti-Americanism; the grandmother says that War, not the Bomb, is the problem. But no one raises the question of why wars start. This movie's pacifism is a pacifier. Kurosawa wrote the script, from a novel by Kiyoko Murata; Takao Saito and Masaharu Ueda did the cinematography. In Japanese.—M.S. (Lincoln Plaza.)

Rush—What a misnomer! Based on Kim Wozencraft's autobiographical novel about a Texas male-female narc team who cook evidence in more ways than one, this movie is a stone drag. With Jennifer Jason Leigh and Jason Patric skillfully imitating the ravages of addiction and withdrawal, it's basically an old-fashioned junkie drama. Even though the director, Lili Fini Zanuck, cast one of the wiliest actors from "Drugstore Cowboy," Max Perlich, as a dealer-turned-snitch, she didn't learn much from that movie. Zanuck doesn't convey the exhilaration and the jumping adrenaline that hook the protagonists. The movie is all falling action, and we're not even sure where the characters are falling *from*. Novelist-turned-screenwriter Pete Dexter, who did the adaptation, shares the usual Hollywood disdain for "back story." A canny group of actors play the bad guys, and they're better defined than the heroes—the rogues' gallery takes over the midway. It includes Special K McCray, who displays a dazzling, derisive chuckle as a black heroin honcho; William Sadler, who exudes psycho-killer ambience as a pusher of "blue ringers"; and the massive, stoic Gregg Allman, who's potently ambigious as a racketeer suspected of being the kingpin. Eric Clapton's virtuoso rock score advances the tension and the druggy romance more than the filmmakers or the stars do. The transparent Leigh acts out, the opaque Patric acts in, but these opposites don't attract.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema II, Loews Orpheum II, Chelsea Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country—A better subtitle might be "The Lost Opportunity." Directed by Nicholas Meyer (who also helmed the best in the series, "Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan"), this supposed valedictory for the original cast has tons of pastiche and not enough pep. Trusting the wisdom of Spock (Leonard Nimoy), the Federation (read "free world") selects Captain Kirk (William Shatner) to escort a contingent of Klingons (read "Soviets") to a peace conference (read "end of Cold War"). But as Spock's ancestor, Sherlock Holmes, might have said, there's sabotage afoot. There's also a parade of references to the Klingons' favorite bard, William Shakespeare. The allusion-mongering soars only when the full-throated Klingons played by David Warner and Christopher Plummer brush up their Shakespeare over dinner with Kirk and crew. Plummer's bellicose General Chang promises to become one of the worthiest of the starship Enterprise's opponents, rivalling Ricardo Montalban's Khan. So it's deflating that instead of juicy confrontations between Kirk and Chang, Meyer delivers a silly exercise in crime detection, and a trip to Klingon Siberia. Besides the regular company (DeForest Kelley, James Doohan, Nichelle Nichols, George Takei, Walter Koenig), there's an impressive, diverse array of supporting players, including Rosana DeSoto, Kim Cattrall, Kurtwood Smith, John Schuck, and Iman, who's wittily cast as a shape-changer.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Embassy.)

Strangers in Good Company—It takes a skilled, intuitive filmmaker to give audiences the illusion—and the pleasures—of unstructured time. That's what first-time feature director Cynthia Scott does in this unusual, documentary-flavored portrait of seven senior women and a female tour-bus driver stranded in the gorgeous, unpopulated Mont Tremblant region of Quebec. Scott uses non-professional performers and draws on their real lives to flesh out this enticingly calm survival drama. The movie's laid-back bliss compensates for its poky, awkward spots. Scott's attitude toward old age is restorative. She doesn't turn her heroines into spiritual icons. Their stamina and senses may have diminished, but experience hasn't smoothed the edges off their characters. As they bond in a persuasive, unforced way, their thoughts and feelings about spouses, children, jobs, and their own self-images trickle or spill out. The movie is an Indian-summer harvest of off-hand, unexpected insights and overviews. Michelle Sweeney is the bus driver; the seniors are Alice Diabo, Constance Garneau, Winifred Holden, Cissy Meddings, Mary Meigs, Catherine Roche, and Beth Webber. The script is credited to Gloria Demers, Scott, David Wilson, and Sally Bochner. David de Volpi did the balmy, serene cinematography. A National Film Board of Canada Production.—M.S. (Cinema Village 12th Street.)

In "The Diary of a Country Priest" (playing January 28-29, at the Walter Reade Theatre), Robert Bresson's 1950 film of the Georges Bernanos novel, the title character is both timeless and startlingly modern. As played by Claude Laydu, he's a religious neurasthenic. He's almost all spirit: he forces his parishioners to meet him not just face to face but soul to soul. Their reactions include discomfort, rapture, and rage. The old hands who befriend him—a tough, earthy priest and an atheistic doctor—respond more to his integrity than to his torments of faith. Still, the youthful curé isn't just an odd man out. The hunger of his spirit for communion overrides the limits of his experience and understanding. He happens upon depth-perceptions of the other characters. At times, he could be practicing a sanctified, rough-hewn kind of telepathy.

Bresson selects passages from the novel and re-creates them verbatim, both in dialogue scenes and in voice-over diary sections. The curé's handwriting, the ink blotters that resemble Rorschach tests, the tight shots of his cloaked, fragile figure, and the close-ups of his anguished brow and burning eyes work together to pull viewers into the hero's consciousness. The rigor of the filmmaking heightens its sensory impact: the sound of a distant gunshot seems deafening when it registers on the curé's countenance. In a famous scene, the priest pierces to the heart of a countess who reproaches God for the death of her son. It may be the most persuasive account of redemption ever put on film. With the sparest means, Bresson achieves an extraordinary quality—a religious kinesis.

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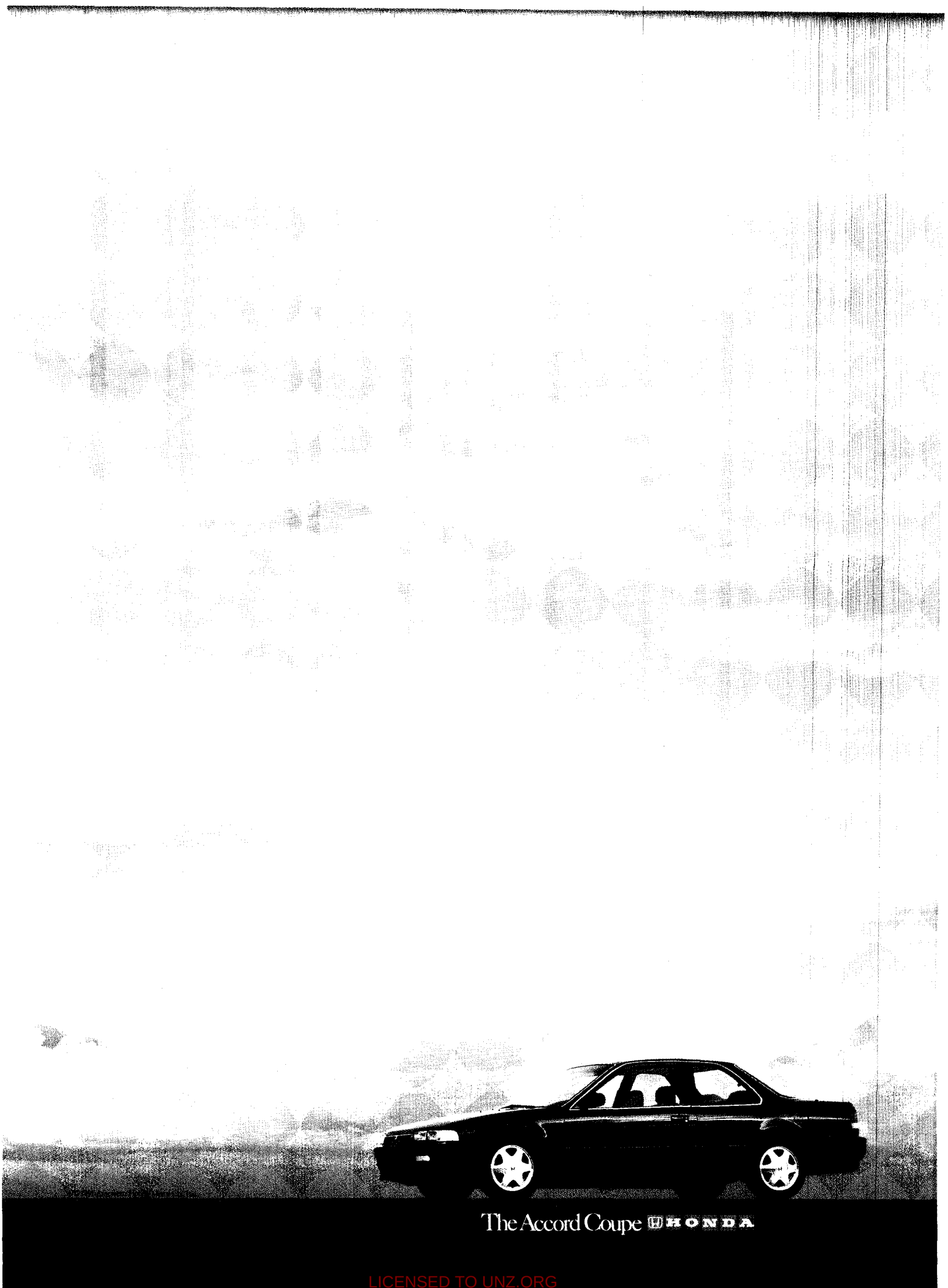

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

SEVENTY-FIVE thousand: that's the figure being quoted in all the news stories on how many people were killed in the course of the twelve-year war that is officially about to end in El Salvador. On February 1st, under the terms of an accord negotiated by a United Nations peace commission and signed last week, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, or F.M.L.N., will begin demobilization. The Salvadoran government troops will hold their fire. Then, if everything goes according to schedule, if the leadership on both sides finds something worth preserving in the peace terms, and if five and a half million Salvadorans are very lucky, the country will know some peace. The death count—a dreadful measurement of the cost of vicious class hatred, reckless utopianism, and Cold War surrogate warfare—will climb no higher. And the Salvadorans will perhaps have the equanimity to ponder whether their seventy-five thousand dead were worth it.

At times, it seemed that the people of El Salvador had accepted with too much enthusiasm the international mandate to kill each other in the name of various forms of liberty or justice. Their society has been a violent one for much of the country's unsettled, unjust history, but ever since the mid-nineteen-seventies, when the small guerrilla factions that grew into the F.M.L.N. began trying to put an end to the injustice, and death-squad activity multiplied as a result, killing in El Salvador has come to involve not simply death but atrocious, nihilist acts of malevolence. How to forget the murder, in March of 1980, of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, who one Sunday at Mass implored soldiers not to shoot their own people, only to be killed the next day at another Mass, at the precise moment when he raised his arms in prayer? Or the victims of the massacre at the Sumpul River—refugees who were crossing the border into Honduras when Army troops opened fire on them? When eyewitnesses later told how the soldiers had slit open pregnant women's bellies and murdered the children within, the idea was so monstrous that hysterical exaggeration was suspected.

The conflict in El Salvador taught reporters who worked there over the years to accept horror and resist shock, and yet every time the worst appeared to have happened, there was a new atrocity, so inconceivable that, ironically, it was easy for the United States government to deny that it had taken place. Washington's full-scale involvement with this poisoned struggle began just a year after Archbishop Romero begged the United States to stay out of the conflict. Beginning in March of 1981, the Reagan Administration stepped in with advisers, financial aid, and uncounted tons of military equipment—a commitment so great that it all but forced the United States to deny that the Salvadoran military was flawed by a murderous streak and was deeply unloved by its people. The few government atrocities that were formally recognized as such by the United States became symbolic watersheds in the war, not because they led to any letup from the horror but because they were at least accepted as *real*.

One such moment came in December of 1980, when three Catholic nuns and a lay worker from the United States were raped and killed by soldiers. As Robert E. White, the United States Ambassador to El Salvador, watched the bodies being unearthed, he said, "They will not get away with it this time," but "they"—the security forces that everyone understood the Ambassador to be referring to—for the most part *did* get away with it, and with much more. Ten years ago, Salvadoran troops that had been trained, equipped, and indoctrinated by the United States carried out a massacre in the village of Mozote and its environs, in which nearly eight hundred people were butchered in the course of a single week. This event was among the many that were officially denied both in Washington and in El Salvador. Today, the figure of seventy-five thousand victims remains an estimate—accurate perhaps to within ten thousand or so—because there was no possibility of an official count. The great majority of the victims were neither guerrillas nor soldiers killed in combat but civilians, like the Mozote peasants, who were suspected of support for the guerrillas, and whose loss was never computed in Washington.

P.R. people at the State Department

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and at the United States Embassy in El Salvador, trying to speak up for "our" side, frequently pointed out during the war that not all the atrocities were the work of government troops, and, strictly speaking, this was true. The guerrillas inflicted some of their worst acts on each other, though, as if they had internalized and accepted the Salvadoran upper classes' view of them. Dostoyevski could have written the history of Cayetano Carpio, a baker who left the Communist Party to found the Popular Liberation Forces—the largest of the five groups in the F.M.L.N.—and who one day decided that his chief comrade-in-arms, an elderly former schoolteacher who used the code name Ana María, had gone soft and was a traitor. She died at night in a Sandinista safe house in Nicaragua, bleeding from dozens of knife and icepick wounds inflicted, on Carpio's orders, by one of his closest comrades. Shortly after the appalled Sandinista leadership held a meeting with Carpio and charged him with the murder, he retired to a quiet room and shot himself in the head.

Except for the exhaustion openly acknowledged by both sides in the conflict, and the Bush Administration's boredom with a war that cost billions of dollars and was clearly going nowhere, there is no particular reason for the killing to end. More than a decade after the simmering guerrilla insurrection broke out into full-scale war, eighty-five per cent of the rural population lacks electricity, running water, and adequate sanitary facilities; half of all children under five are malnourished; the business sector's murderous hostility to the very notion of unions persists; and the small but powerful unions remain crucibles of radical anger.

The United Nations-sponsored peace accord includes provisions for transforming the F.M.L.N. into a political party and for distributing some of the land that came under rebel control to the peasants. There are also plans to cut the size of the Army by about half, to thirty-one thousand, and to incorporate the guerrillas into a restructured security force. It would be mean-spirited to deny that these plans, if they are carried out, will be genuine steps toward the solution of the conflict, but they are not, in themselves, a guarantee of lasting peace. There is much talk these days of rebuilding El Salvador, but a truly lasting peace requires that the country that existed before the war not be restored. The two sides in the accord, however, represent that old, bitter nation. General René Emilio Ponce, who has been charged in congressional investigations with complicity in the murder, just over two years ago, of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper, and her daughter, remains as Defense Minister. President Alfredo Cristiani is the political heir of the ultra-rightist Roberto D'Aubuisson, who was linked by Ambassador White to the murder of Archbishop Romero. The leadership of the F.M.L.N. shares an extreme and suspicious world view, which in the past promoted the execution of dissenters as well as the systematic destruction of the Salvadoran economy. Both sides, having fought each other to a standstill, must now learn to live with each other. And they may find themselves with no significant assistance from Washington, which is now so busy trying to figure out how to save Eastern Europe from itself.

The raging class hatred in El Salvador did not need foreign assistance to prosper. The death squads were not a United States invention, and the F.M.L.N. continued its military offensive even after a Sandinista rearguard in Nicaragua was no longer available, and long after the Soviet Union withdrew whatever paltry and reluctant support it had offered. But when the United States chose to step in, it geometrically increased the potential for death in El Salvador. One wonders what was in President Cristiani's mind in the final stages of the peace negotiations, when, as the *Times* has reported, Administration officials interceded every time the talks reached a deadlock, presumably to remind the Salvadoran President that the game was up—that the boundless aid so enthusiastically provided by the United States in headier days would be no more. Washington has a history of dropping former allies cold, but El Salvador deserves better. Its people have a right to demand that the United States now spend at least as much on programs to combat El Salvador's extreme social injustice as it once did on armored helicopters and grenade launchers. It would be a small price to pay to avoid the possibility of another seventy-five thousand dead.

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Matchmaker

OUR friend Ellen, whose boyfriend had just given her the shove, announced recently that she'd made an appointment for a consultation with Dr. Barbara Chasen. Three years ago, Dr. Chasen founded a service that she calls the Introductions Club, and now, fifteen happy couples later, she is regarded by her clients, many of whom have done a good deal of comparison-shopping in the field, as New York City's foremost Jewish feminist matchmaker.

Dr. Chasen asked Ellen what she's looking for in a mate. "Emotional maturity," Ellen told her.

"You'll have to get over that," Dr. Chasen replied.

"Warmth and intimacy?" Ellen suggested.

"You want warmth and intimacy, I'll introduce you to another woman," Dr. Chasen said. "Because that's not where men are at right now." Single women in New York, according to Dr. Chasen, outnumber single men so disproportionately that the men feel they can afford to be choosy. "But I don't think it gets us anywhere to engage in men-bashing," she told Ellen. "I really don't believe that men are so different in what they want. It's just that being pursued gives a man an unrealistic sense of his own worth. I think that women would be every bit as demanding and unforgiving if the situation were reversed."

Dr. Chasen is out to change the world, and she is not going about it quietly. A former political activist, who is now a full-time psychoanalyst, she devotes her spare energies, which seem to be considerable, to the dating crisis of the nineties, giving interviews to newspapers and magazines and anyone else who's willing to listen. We called her recently to ask her whether we might come and talk to her about the current state of emergency, as she sees it. She gave us the address over the phone: "Apartment 8-N—'n' as in

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'nurturing.' " What we found when we got there, on a Saturday morning, was an attractive woman who looked to be in her forties, a ten-year-old boy by the name of Shaun (her son), and a Yorkshire terrier by the name of Fuzzy (his dog). Dr. Chasen was wearing a black turtleneck and black pants, with reading glasses hanging from a lanyard around her neck; her hair was in tight waves. "Are you married?" she asked as we were taking off our coat.

Like other analysts we have known, Dr. Chasen is in the habit of answering a question with a question, which makes an interview with her a constant scramble just to keep her in her place as the interviewee. We held our own long enough to ascertain that her service is for professionally successful Jewish people between the ages of thirty and fifty-five; that she will not accept a patient as a client, and vice versa; that she has sometimes turned down potential clients because she felt that she couldn't work with them. Unlike many other matchmakers, Dr. Chasen doesn't guarantee her clients marriage. What they get for a membership fee is a series of introductions, one on one, or else some combination of introductions and parties, which she holds two or three times a year. Many New York City matchmakers charge only the women who come to them, not the men. Dr. Chasen charges men and women equally, because she believes that a relationship between a woman who has paid to meet a man and a man who has paid nothing to meet the woman is off on the wrong foot before it starts.

Listening to Dr. Chasen's litany of the discrepancies between what men are looking for in a woman and what women are looking for in a man, we found ourself thinking that it was practically a miracle for any two people ever to get together. Men in their late forties and fifties want women under thirty-five; women under thirty-five want men their own age. Men with children often insist on women without them. Short men are willing to go out with taller women; women—even the short ones—want tall men. Men—even overweight men—refuse to date overweight women. Dr. Chasen says that the best clients are the ones "who come with no hope."

Trade negotiators from the United States break off talks when Japan adamantly refuses to import any American C.E.O.s.

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At Dr. Chasen's invitation, we went back a week or so later to look in on a party she was throwing for fifty members of the Introductions Club—twenty-five women, twenty-five men. "I always have lots of food," Dr. Chasen had told us, "because everybody is so anxious under the circumstances." Like most of Dr. Chasen's events, this one was organized as a benefit—an auction, for which members were encouraged to contribute "something personally meaningful, revealing, or funny," with the proceeds to go to Ethiopian Jewry.

The scene we found when we arrived bore a striking resemblance to a college mixer, except that the mixer was getting under way twenty-five years late—the men with their hairlines in retreat, the women with experience written on their faces. There were two or three people we diagnosed as clinically single.

A man in a three-piece suit walked up to our friend Ellen and introduced himself. "I came over here to talk to you because I think you're cute," he began. He was a lawyer, he said. We asked him what had prompted him to get in touch with Dr. Chasen. "I'm looking for love," he explained, "but it seems to be impossible to find, so I decided that drastic measures were required and that it was time to hire a professional."

A woman who had been a member of the club since June told us, "Dr. Chasen fixed me up with one guy, and on paper he had a lot of what I was looking for—he was an executive, he liked going to jazz clubs, he had a lot of style. Unfortunately, he had no personality."

"Sure, it would be great to be with someone," a suntanned man wearing a navy-blue blazer and a wood-block-printed tie said. "But it's a phenomenon of the era—and part of the problem, I think—that there are just too

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many choices available. So everybody wants the perfect companion. I see it in my work, I see it in my friends. Everybody's going out with the woman who's got everything except for that one crucial something. But, hey, if you ask me, women are the same way."

Dr. Chasen came around, urging people to eat more.

A man in a tweed sports coat and khaki pants told us that before signing on with Dr. Chasen he had gone to another dating agency. "But they treated the single men as if they were sick and the single women as if they were merely unlucky," he said.

A vivacious woman with hair that was prematurely gray said, "The great thing about the Introductions Club is that you feel somebody takes seriously what is probably the priority in your life—to meet someone outside your network. You know, among Orthodox Jews there's no shame in finding a mate. God wants you to get married, and the rest is administration."

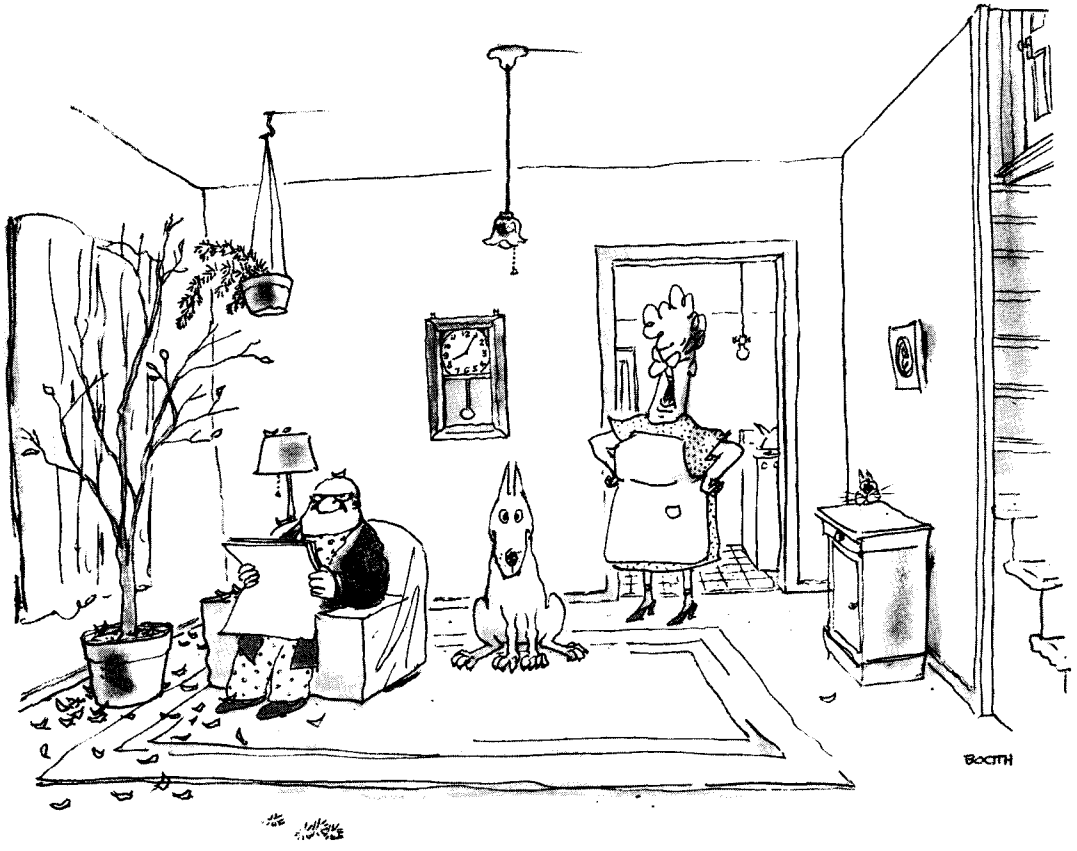
The Guy Who Caught the Ball

LAST summer, Eli Ganias had an idea that he still considers sure-fire. He had just caught a foul ball at Shea Stadium, and when the crowd rose in a collective cheer the notion popped into Eli's head. "Why not open a restaurant?" he asked himself. "And why not call it The Guy Who Caught the Ball's Place?" In his mind Eli went on to construct the establishment. "The walls will be lined with photos of me making the catch, and the ball will sit on a velvet pillow in the foyer," he told us recently. "Tourists will wander in and ask a waitress, 'Is the guy who caught the ball here?' 'No,' she'll answer. 'He only comes in on weekends.' "

When he said this, Eli was sitting in the front room of Rusty Staub's on Fifth—the midtown eatery owned by the former Mets right fielder. Eli paid close attention to the restaurant's décor (the putting-green-style carpet, the color TVs, the baseball memorabilia) but claimed to have little interest in the whereabouts of Rusty. "I liked to watch him play, but he's no role model for my ambitions," he said. "Rusty was a player, and I'm a fan. Our roles are different. My restaurant will be more like a memorial to the unknown fan. Staub made some great plays, but, let's face it, some of the best catches you see are in the stands."

Eli, a twenty-eight-year-old actor from Freehold, New Jersey, is a lifelong Mets fan who just happens to be blessed with the ideal foul-ball-catching physique. "Small enough to squeeze into a crowd but big enough to hold my own," he explained. "Even though most of it's luck, you have to be able to protect the ball once you've caught it. Especially somewhere like Yankee Stadium. I know this, because once I caught a ball there." Actually, he added, it wasn't a foul but a sharp ground-rule double that hopped the left-field fence and landed at his feet. "Five guys fought for it, but it's in my house," he said. "If a ball comes to you, that's great. If you have to fight or run for it, that's fine, too. But if you have to interfere with the game, knock the ball out of a fielder's glove, or scoop a live ball off the field, it's not a legitimate ball to catch. You must not change the course of events.

"Still, when I think of catching a ball, that's not the one I remember. What I remember is the ball that gave me the restaurant idea. I was in the mezzanine at Shea, and I asked this kid next to me, 'Do you sit here often?' 'First time,' he said. 'First time at Shea?' I asked. 'First time at a pro game,' his mother answered. Right then, I said to myself, 'If I catch a ball, I'm giving it to this kid.' That was an easy promise, because how often do you become the guy who caught the ball? But, sure enough, Kevin McReynolds fouls one back and a little to the left. All the reaching hands in front of me part like the Red Sea. Then this strange-looking hand shoots up and makes the catch. When I looked down, I discovered it was my hand. I held up the ball, and the crowd went wild. This was a one-handed grab, you understand. I felt almost like a player. Who knows? Maybe McReynolds even looked up and said, 'Nice catch.' At first, I was excited. I had caught Kevin Mac's foul—the foul that kept him alive and let him get on base. Then Mackey Sasser came up and hit the winning home run. So, in a sense, I played a direct role in that Mets victory."



"Harold! Come down off the mountain!"

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Eli watched the door for a moment, and then said, "I realize that this type of reasoning can go too far—that it can send you over the edge. Just look around Shea: the place is filled with half-crazed fans. Have you ever seen a grown man in the stands with a glove on his hand? It's not a pretty sight. I can be honest, because that was almost me. I used to put on my Mets hat and my Mets shorts and go to the game. Then one day I couldn't find my blue-and-orange Mets socks, and I just about refused to leave the house without them. That's when I first sensed that I might be losing it."

Returning to the foul, Eli explained that as soon as he caught it he felt torn. "This voice in me said, 'You promised to give it away.' I'll give the kid the next one, I thought. But the voice said, 'There won't be a next one.' So I gave the kid the ball." This was an act devoid of the attention-hunger so often associated with the suddenly famous: the crowd's gaze had already shifted back to the field. "I didn't do it to be a hero," Eli said. "This was a promise I made to myself, not to the kid, so I had to keep it. If I had saved that ball, it would have been a reminder not of the game or the catch but of my own broken vow. To display it in my house would have been a shameful thing. Later, I bought a souvenir ball, and that's the one I want to display in the restaurant."

Throughout childhood, Eli had imagined how he would react if one day he became the guy who caught the ball, and, accordingly, he studied the actions of the chosen whenever he had the chance. "I've seen some pitiful displays," he said sadly. "There was a guy out at Yankee Stadium who had two fouls hit to him in one game—he dropped them both. The first time, the crowd sighed; the second time, they booed. He tried to play it like a joke, but there's nothing funny about dropping two balls in a crowded stadium. I always imagined myself catching the foul, never dropping it. Another time, on TV, I saw a guy in the stands holding a baby in his arms. The guy dropped the kid to catch a foul. It's a tough choice, but in that situation you've got to hang on to the kid and hope the gods will smile on you again in a later inning. He did catch that ball, but the baby started to cry and the crowd let him have it. Some things are just more important than foul balls."

"I certainly hope you're composting the leftovers."

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Conspiracy Theory

AN intermittently paranoid friend writes:

1. Last week, I was riding in a cab and felt something hard on the seat underneath me, so I lifted my coat and there found *a Kennedy half-dollar*. I swear I hadn't seen one in ten years.

2. The next day, my husband was at the Union Square Greenmarket buying an apple, and received as change *a Kennedy half-dollar*. Same data as above regarding the time lapsed since last sighting of this particular coin. Even weirder: the apple guy, as he was giving my husband the change, mumbled, "A Swedish girl gave this to me." Decode *that*, if you can.

3. Recently, I got my hair cut. Right afterward, a friend of mine said, "Now you look just like one of the *Kennedy* girls." I do?

4. At a party, another person commented on my hair by saying, "God, you look so *sixties!*" Hey, we all know about what happened in the sixties.

5. The other day, I went to a meeting at one of the magazines I write for, and the book editor mentioned that she would like someone to review the new book by William *Kennedy*. A few minutes later, someone mentioned the writer *Kennedy* Fraser. Strange, or *what*?

6. I think I saw Caroline jogging the other day. Or, if it wasn't Caroline, it was somebody who looked a lot like her. I run in the Park all the time, and before this I had never seen anyone who looked even a *little* like her.

7. My husband and I had absolutely no plans one night last weekend, and we decided to go see that movie that everyone's worked up about. So we headed over to the theatre, but when we got there the place was mobbed and the movie was sold out. What was creepy was not just that all these people had chosen to see the same movie at the same time and on the same night but that they were all total strangers. And they had gathered there *entirely without prompting from me*.

Look, am I making too much out of this, or is something going on?

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KEIRETSU

WYATT ANDREWS, CBS News Correspondent: Dennis Gormley sells an auto part you've probably never heard of, an engine bearing. But as auto parts, it's among the best. Gormley's company, Federal Mogul, sells millions of these bearings to Mercedes-Benz, Volkswagen, and GM, to name a few, but despite constant effort, he has never sold a single bearing to the Japanese. Why?

DENNIS GORMLEY: They already have suppliers—the suppliers that are a part of the Keiretsu.

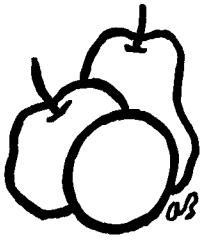
ANDREWS: The Keiretsu. The corporate family. The cartel in which interconnected Japanese companies buy from each other, locking out foreigners, has long been a trade barrier inside Japan. What's new is that in the auto parts field, the Japanese Keiretsu has come to America.

—*Transcript of "CBS Evening News."*

SUNDAY, 9 P.M.

"*Keiretsu*"—now, what does that mean? "Cartel," "trust." We had them, for God's sake. What's the God-damned fuss? Now, in the twilight of my life, I have to listen to a lot of nonsense about *keiretsu*.

"*Japanese 'Keiretsu' pose danger to U.S. auto suppliers.*" What of it? Old Mr. Jimmy Hooder posed a danger to U.S. auto suppliers—he drove them all out of business, for God's sake, and he was the president of the Reading Room, most stylish man ever, for God's sake. Those tweeds, that way he had of saying "Hello" as though he were saying "Goodbye." Treasured memories, for God's sake. Why the hell *should* a man like Old Mr. Jimmy Hooder refrain from posing a danger to U.S. auto suppliers? Made it more fun for the rest of us, for God's sake. Treasured memories. I remember I was with his daughter Marjorie, for instance, Stream Club, 1936 or so, nice table, pink tablecloth, one of those friendly little beaded shades around a little lamp right in the middle of the table—the envy of everyone, for God's sake, sitting right there with his daughter, and he walked straight toward us. Friendly as could be. The whole room noticed: don't think I didn't notice that. The man who ravaged the independent automobile-parts manufacturers of the Middle West heading right toward us. Of course, there was a *frisson*. And a smile. On his face. "Put out that cigarette," he said to me, and I did—damned fast.



We were young, terribly young, and we loved to hear him tell us how he did it. He would start by relaxing in his big chair and wreathing his head with cigar smoke, and then he would talk about the Pilgrim Fathers, and Conestoga wagons across the prairie, and his grandmother bringing the big old Louis XIV escritoire from Philadelphia, and defending it from Indian attack, and dying for it, an arrow in her back piercing the fine muslin you used to be able to get for anybody's dresses back then. Men, women, children wore dresses of fine muslin in those days and never thought anything of it. Then he'd get to the good part: the heroics of it. "I saw that there were too many God-damned independent auto suppliers and that if I took a firm, principled stand I could drive them all out of business," he would say. The deep intake of breath came from us, the junior members of the Junior Holiday Dance Floor Committee, which was about as exclusive a group as you could come by in those days. Talk about *keiretsu*—we kept anybody out who couldn't prove direct descent from someone who had driven everybody out of business except for himself.

TREASURED memories. Mother. Mother at the bridge table. Someone has mentioned a *place*. Mother had a great sense of *place*. We owned Indianapolis at one point, part of a deal that gave us all the Pontiacs in the Middle West in return for getting Mr. Alfred Sloan into the Stream Club, which didn't go through in the end—too businesslike, that air of the executive suite he could never get rid of. Poor Sloan. Mother carried that authority. Anyone who arrived in a Pontiac—well, you can imagine. Anyone from Indianapolis—well, you can imagine. Sometimes when she had a really bad hand at bridge she'd just look up as though someone *had* arrived in a Pontiac, and she would say, "We owned all those." Just under her breath. Talk about *keiretsu*.

Bobby Terwilliger, for God's sake. His family owned all the sugar in the world. Bobby Terwilliger was married three times. First, to my sister Boo. Then Margaret Thompson of the Press Quik fortune, and, lastly, that charity nurse. No. All wrong. Bobby was married *four* times. First to my sister Boo (must call Boo soon—get number from caseworker), second to Margaret Thompson of the Press Quik Thompsons, *third* to that cunning little Lottie Penema with the sinuous body, and *then* the nurse. Bobby took Boo on a fantastic around-the-world honeymoon. Naturally, they were welcomed in every port. Native girls carrying small children swam out to meet them in Singapore. They thought Boo was a manifestation of pure light. For several days Boo stayed out on deck *blessing* people and giving *darshan*, which caused her no end of trouble with the Vatican when she was annulling Bobby. (See scrapbook.) So different now. Vatican doesn't seem to figure so much in what we do these days. When things were right, I *always* had a friend before the Rota, whatever that was. "Reno for some; Rota for others," was a phrase that cropped up.

IN those days, "Rocca-cocca-conda" was a phrase that cropped up. Oh, how we sang that song.

Rocca-ca-ca-conda
You and me
Just you see
We're ga-ga-ga-ga
Gonna
Get-a-get
Be-yonda
Your fast reply
A kiss on the sly
Rocca-cocca-conda

Just now I am standing in the very spot where all the fun was, here at the Hotel Subaltern. Rocca-cocca-conda. This is the spot where all the damned good fun happened. Look! There is the gay wallpaper they went in for at the Racaconda Room. Remember the little coconut trees and the girls with the sarongs? A little unrealistic, maybe, those huge hips. But here I am.

And what about all this fuss about *keiretsu*? Rocca-cocca-conda. *They* didn't let just anybody in, I can tell you. Bobby Terwilliger owned all the sugar in the world. The Sugar Trust. I mean, if you put one little cube of the stuff in a cup of tea, it was money for old Bobby. Or his grandfather—I guess it was a little different by the time Bobby was growing up. But for heaven's sake, why get upset if all the auto parts are owned by this one or that one? Who gives a God damn about auto parts? "Can't break into the *keiretsu*." Well, I, for one, don't want to.

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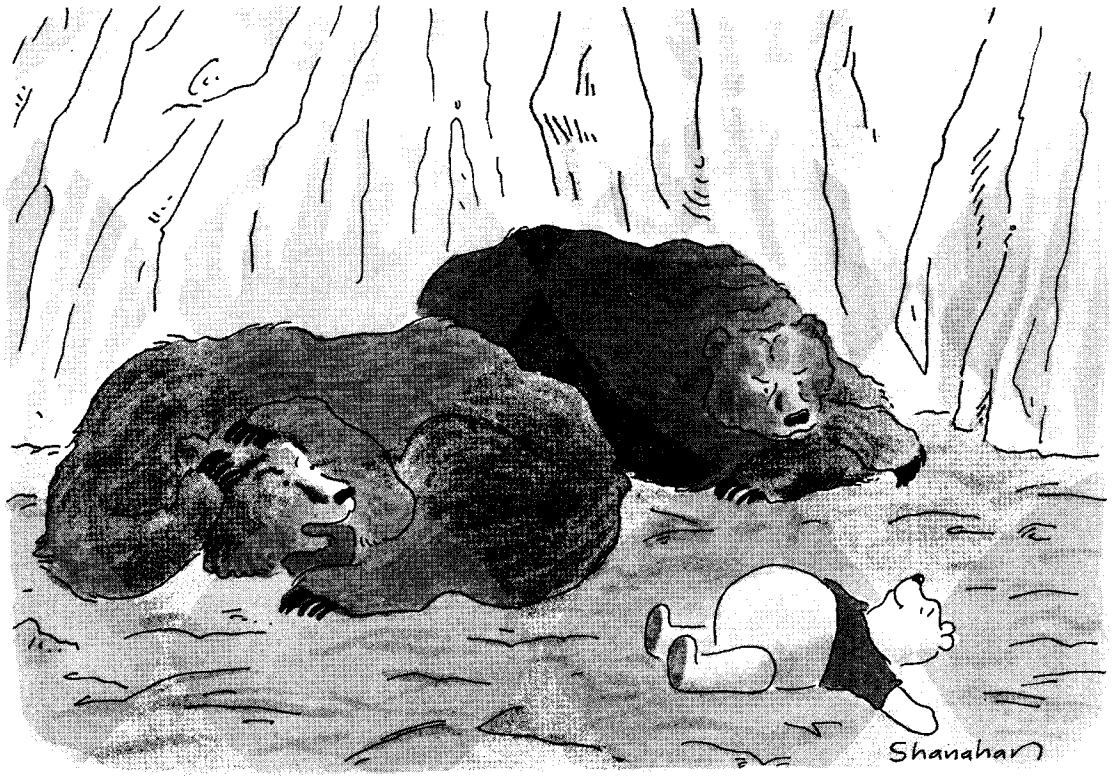

"He hums in his sleep."

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Where was I? Bobby Terwilliger married three times. First of all to my sister Boo. Boo had a little walkout with Benji Battapore on their honeymoon. Benji wasn't much, but the begum took exception and sent janissary-type fellows to *rip* poor Boo out of his arms. (Poor Boo. Must call her. Must send her something nice. Nothing with a sharp point, though.) On the other hand, it wasn't so bad for Boo, since Benji wasn't much, and the janissaries were a little more in her line. Boo liked them stocky. On the other hand, Bobby was fit to be tied. I must say Bobby was *almost stuffy*. I took him to task for it later. "Don't be a begum," I said, and that kind of caught on in our set. If anyone did anything stuffy like criticize another fellow's morals because he happened to do this or that perfectly ordinary thing that anyone would do if he got the chance, we would say, "Don't be a begum."

I started that—people saying to other people, "Don't be a begum." A fellow doesn't want to be ripping people out of other people's arms. A fellow ought to be casual; *I* always am. Try to be, anyway. It is a little grim here at the Hotel Subaltern, what with the main entrance closed and all of us trekking in the back way through that grim little corridor with the coconuts. And all this talk about *keiretsu*. Must call Lottie Penema. Get number from caseworker. Talk about *keiretsu*—Bobby Terwilliger owned all the sugar in the world. Did I say that?

MONDAY, 3 A.M.

My God. We had all the girls. That wicked little Franny Lynch under the porch, the moonlight peeking through, and Meggy Frawley later that night and Sally Von Deusen and . . . Of course, a fellow wants to get them all for himself. And broad beaches, the way they used to look—as far as the eye could see. "No Trespassing"—naturally, if you let everyone in you spoil it. And that wonderful night. Do you remember (I ask myself) getting up in the full starlight and slipping out? Down at the dock, the rumrunners were coming in. All those wonderful guys running rum. Rum. *They brought it in on floating night clubs.* Naturally, you couldn't let everyone in on it. You kept it just for yourself and your friends. Oh, but they let me in on it that night.

Talk about *keiretsu*, Bobby Terwilliger's people owned all the sugar in the world. Damned nice moment for me—sort of an opportunity for a bon mot: this rude-faced fellow, not the sort of fellow one knew at all, came up to Bobby Terwilliger one time and started in about all the women and children picking the sugar cane, too many long hours in the sugar-cane fields (wherever they are), and so forth; I just said, "Don't be a begum," and the fellow got the point right away that he was infra dig, and then Billy Bronck threw him out. That was at the old Ponco Room, which was terribly hard to get into at that time, talk about breaking in.

Naturally, one wants to have things for oneself, but it doesn't do to be ripping a *keiretsu* out of another fellow's arms. One thing we might do, though, is beef up the obituaries in the New York *Times*. I read one the other day that I didn't like. There was this fellow gone on to the other side who had given a new twist to advertising back-pain pills—written a little jingle. Didn't seem like the sort of thing a fellow would want mentioned. We never mentioned a little backache, let alone a little backache pill, let alone a little jingle about a backache pill, and we were the best set of fellows, I can tell you. In my day when a fellow in our set tottered off without having much in the way of an ordinary career we always said that he was a "clubman," and then right into the stories about the Conestoga wagons and how fine-quality muslin was widely available in those days and how his grandfather had put the automobile-parts business in the Middle West on a more rational footing. Showed a kind of respect—for the pioneers, for the automobile-parts business, for everyone. I think we should go back to showing that kind of respect. The Japanese respect that kind of respect. If we do things in a more manly way, maybe they will let us into one or two of their *keiretsu*.

—GEORGE W. S. TROW

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GOMORRAH

Also, in Gomorrah, there were plays,
a life of the mind;
there were the schools
and the quiet temples; Sodom
and "the new theatre"
were conveniently located,
just an hour's ride away. There
the wife of Lot held her
gatherings, "my *petites*
soirées," for the priests
and the politicians
and the intellectual élite.

And in the hills the wild dogs cried
And the sand shifted on the desert stones.

But Gomorrah was mostly as you will have heard:
litigious, polyglot, city of worlds; a scene
from a favorite story frequently told.
There was the traffic, the market banter—
merchants crying catalogues of marvels: uncut
rubies, silver mirrors, porcelain,
parrots, olives at discount, clocks and
sea salt, carbuncles, pearls—the streets
full of crowds, the dirty gypsies,
the quick brown-ankled girls,
the old men smoking on the temple
stoop, the smells of hashish and tanneries,
the bellowing herds.

And in the hills the wild dogs cried
And the desert gods shifted sand across the stones.

The wife of Lot
was not *so* young anymore.
She didn't laugh like
the brown-ankled girls;
the wife of Lot wore a veil in public,
and held her tongue.
And she kept the books
in the family establishment,
was quick with an abacus
or a bon mot or advice about money;
knew how to cook
wild duck with rice, how to
pack a camel—and the best caterers
in town "just like old friends,"
and most of the city councilmen.
The wife of Lot
did what she thought
fitting and appropriate
for the wife of a public figure
and a pillar of the community.

And the gods ran along the desert
And a voice echoed across the stones.

Also, the forenamed woman kept
the books from "my schoolgirl days"
at the Temple. She remembered
learning how to pray,
and the philosophers, taught
by an old and frightening priest
at the gilded knees of an idol.
"Someday I'll get back to
them," she would say.

The wife of Lot
had two pretty daughters,
"the very image of their mother";
they were sent, like the mother,
to the Temple school, the very best,
and were taught French
and the philosophers, and could
quite intelligently discuss
"the name of God" or, alternatively,
"the common good."
They were only young girls,
of course; they liked best to laugh
and they were beautifully dressed
and were like all girls silly.
She asked, "Who am I
thus to be blessed?"

And a spirit cried, "Atone, atone,"
And the wind ran along the desert stone.

Once in a generation or so,
a war or an epiphany occurs,
or a transformation, or a revolution,
or a waiting God stirs; a name
comes into a city, a word
is passed down—an Idea seeks
ten righteous men to save,
the rest, the evidently lost, to reap;
to separate those who have kept
their faith from the too far gone,
and from those who have lost
what they'd sought to keep.
Once in a generation
a warning is heard—

Flee, flee to the hills, flee to the valleys,
The cities. Abandon. Atone.

Lot consulted his in-laws,
And the two daughters wept,
And the wife of Lot packed, asking
herself, "How much should we keep?
How much can be kept?"
They made
the abandoning leap—
but you know the rest: how
Lot and his daughters fled
from that place, how they passed
the test. And how
a moment's recollection,
a sudden grief, a backward
glance revealed what she
had quietly foreseen: a pocky
and astringent silent thing.

—Christine Holbo

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THE LITTLE HEART

SOMEWHERE in Missouri, the grass began to look hopeful. The trees budded, and the winter clouds that had followed them all the way from Wisconsin softened and purpled, smelling of rain. Benny rolled down the car window and tested the air with her fingers. "Spring," she pronounced, then wrinkled her nose, as if spring were a dish needing more salt. "Give or take a few ice storms."

Pete, who was driving, only nodded and bore down on the road. He tended to be serious about driving. Benny wanted to call his attention to the leaves—the first chubby, unborn clumps—and invite him to watch their progress into full leaf as they drove south. She reminded herself severely that such instructive, proprietary remarks made you a pain in the ass, and that people could see things for themselves. In the same way, she had to avoid telling too many droll stories about her previous trips south: the Devil's Triangle around Senatobia, Mississippi, where she'd had two separate automotive breakdowns; the amusing incident with the New Orleans customs agent; hotels she'd stayed in, meals she'd eaten, who she'd been in love with at the time and whether they'd been happy or angry, blissful or falling apart. Why should he care? She was terrified of boring him, of becoming one of those nostalgic old broads preening over an ancient glamour. But Benny knew very well that she was glamorous—a glamorous, suspect, outlandish woman.

Sometime tomorrow, a couple of hundred miles closer to spring, it would be warm enough for them to peel off their socks and regard their solemn toes. They'd feel the sun freckling their poor dusty winter skins. They'd even sweat. There would be redbuds and willow ribbons and azaleas, everything she remembered from those past trips. It did not seem unreasonable to imagine this sort of happiness. It seemed like something you could allow yourself.

"Do you want me to drive?" she asked Pete, because he was stretching his spine, shifting his legs, then putting them down in exactly the same place, like a horse in a stall with nowhere to move. "Are you getting cranky?"

He raised his eyebrows—his quizzical face, the one he made whenever she fussed over him. He said that he was fine for now.

"In my youth," said Benny, "I aspired to drive myself everywhere. I think I was trying to prove something."

"Your car tracks to the left. When's the last time you got it aligned? Or have you ever?"

"I did once. I forget when. It always runs fine no matter what I do. I drive better cars these days. I find better drivers." She patted his knee. Idiocy kept spewing out of her. She didn't care. She was that happy.

"I think," said Pete, "that I will start calling you embarrassing pet names in public. Watch me."

"I dare you," said Benny. Oh, he was perfect. He knew when to ignore her and when not to. She was besotted with him.

Benny was a sculptor. She constructed large projects, which sat in the plazas of large office buildings, bright steel beams and arches that jutted and curved and vaulted in the changeable city airs. Witty, postmodern versions of monkey bars and totem poles. She was praised for creating an illusion of motion and energy from heaviness and mass. Benny had tried to imagine Pete's face, the beautiful muscled grooves of his body, in plaster, clay, bronze, polymer, and stone, discarding each in turn. No charcoal or oils. Maybe photography, straightforward stuff. She wouldn't want to settle for anything less than actualities. She wouldn't want to lose him in some artful image.

She had a pet name for him that she would never say. My little heart, she thought. Little dalliance, circumscribed folly. Pete was twenty-six. Benny was forty-four. It was the last chance she would ever have to be besotted.

Benny did not look her age. (But, then, neither did Pete, who got carded in bars in every state.) She'd kept her figure, through nearly abusive discipline, and she hadn't gone crêpey at the neck or eyes. She wore pretty shirts, and jeans, and funky, intricate jewelry. She was a handsome woman with dramatic, angled hair and a vivid mouth. The survival of her good looks—she allowed that there were moments, lights, in which they'd even improved—gave her forebodings. It seemed like something that would have to be paid for sooner or later. She mistrusted the elegant apparition surfacing in her mirror, that amazing construction, her best art. Most of the time she felt none of the things she looked to be—smart, wry, knowing—as if she'd deceived herself as well as age, gotten too clever by half. She was a fraud waiting to be found out, just as age would catch her up eventually. Sometimes, perversely, she even looked forward to letting it all go, surrendering to corrugated skin and a thick waist. No more infernal vanity. She would be shrunken and sexless and dignified, like Georgia O'Keeffe.

THEY spent the night in a motel in West Memphis, Arkansas. It was their first motel. Pete wandered the room, switching things on and off. Benny tested the mattress, which was

JUST PUT THOSE FILES IN THE WASTE-BASKET FOR NOW.
THIS ISN'T COFFEE! IT'S INK!
THESE ARE IN ORDER BY WHO HAD THE PRETTIEST NAME?
MRS. LIPMAN! GET ME OUT OF HERE!
RING!
RING!

MRS. LIPMAN LACKED ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS.

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large but thin, like a slice of inferior bread. They ate dinner in the adjoining restaurant, which had crushed red velvet on the walls and gilded swag lamps with electric cords kinking through their festoons, and effusive menu prose. ("Zesty . . . robust . . . he-man portion.")

"Cheeseburgers," declared Benny. "This is just fodder. We'll eat in New Orleans. Everything there's voluptuous and unwholesome. We'll fit right in."

The waitress arrived then, stretching a polite face over Benny's remarks, which had carried. She inscribed their zesty, tangy, crispy order and went off to enlighten the kitchen.

"You don't have to keep saying things like that," said Pete. "You don't have to make jokes."

"I don't ever know how to act around you: Motherly? Doting? Wordly-wise and tolerant?"

"I'm not an audition. You don't have to act. Drink your drink."

"You're wise beyond your years. Beyond mine, too. I'm drinking, see?"

That night in the motel bed, the mattress cover puckered beneath them, like a skin gone loose from countless such rubbings. The smells were daunting: chilled breath of circulating air, musty pillow, furniture polish, an impersonal man-made stink that was probably the carpet. The strange room orbited around them, eclipsed, finally, by their own breath and skin. Later, Benny lay awake while Pete slept. She did not think there would be any sort of happy ending for the two of them. There would only be an ending. It appalled her to consider how much she was risking, if she did not keep some part of her wits about her.

The next day's driving went faster. They both liked Mississippi—finally someplace truly alien, with its red clay, and pine jungles, and balmy air, and the little towns of softening boards. "Look at these hills," said Pete, marvelling. When he lifted his chin to gaze around him, light touched the rim of his iris, turning it to green glass.

Benny, who was driving, decided to venture a story. "Once, about this time of year, I was driving home, north, with Stephen."

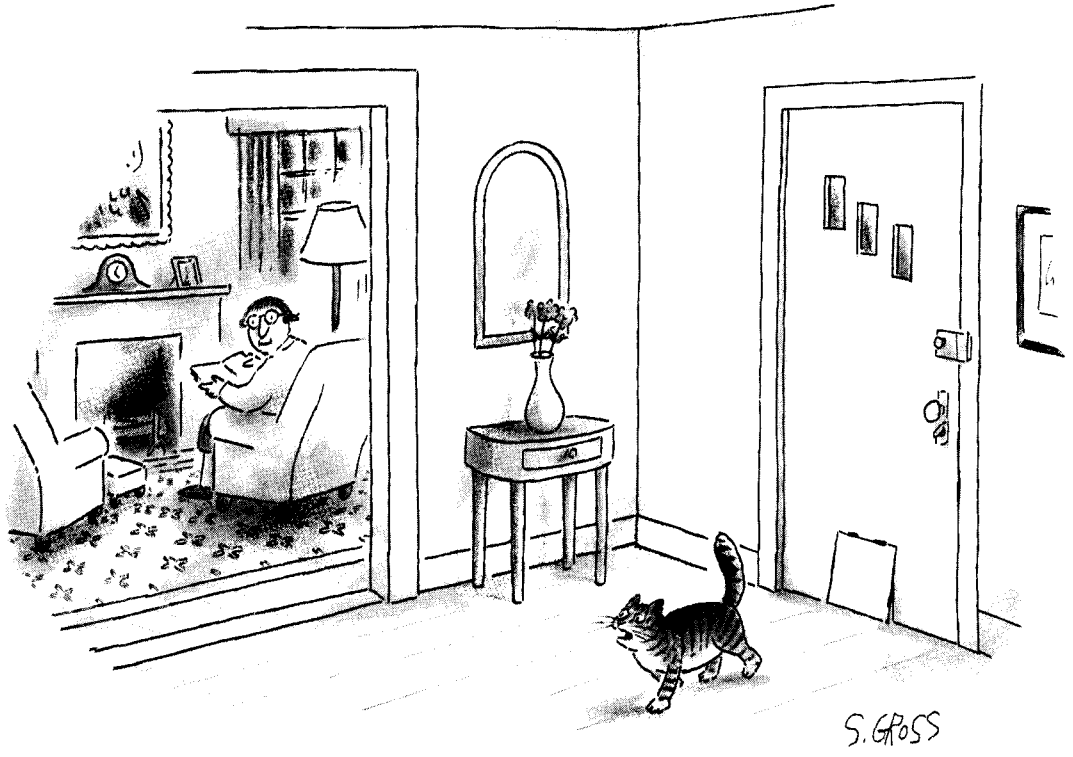
Pete nodded. He knew all about Stephen, who he was: one of the husbands.

"There'd been a freak snow, six or eight inches. The roads were glazed like a skating rink. They didn't have any plows, of course, and only a few loads of sand to dump on the bridges for traction. I can't remember how long it took us to go how many miles, all the mythic details. We saw cars and trucks gone off the road, down at the bottom of the hills. And you'd see the same people inching alongside you for miles. There was one woman driving by herself. We kept passing her, though of course there must have been times we stopped and she passed us. She kept looking over at me. She looked like somebody trapped in a leaking submarine."

Pete made the sort of obliging, respectful noises one makes at such stories. Benny saw again the woman's face, white and stiff as paper, terrified, alone. How many times in her life had Benny worn that face herself. In cars, or standing at darkened windows, or hurtling out of restaurants, or, on one occasion, thrashing up a hillside in a rainstorm with mud sucking at her shoes. All those lost, black, betrayed times when she'd stood on some slippery edge, trying to decide whether or not she wished to throw herself over it. And always there had been enough reason not to. She'd saved herself for revenge or consolation or some absolutely final calamity.

She supposed the woman in the car had survived also. Benny didn't remember if the storm had actually killed people. She thought of the woman now as a cautionary tale in this fat and happy time, when she herself was giddy in love and with a clear road ahead of her. Someday that woman's face would fix itself in Benny's mirror, there to stay.

Pete had his own stories. Once he'd crashed a motorcycle; once he'd been arrested in Mexico; once he and some friends had gone rock climbing in Utah and watched smoke begin to curl around the base of their mountain, like the steaming edge of a bowl of soup. When Pete told his stories he was animated but private. His eyes fixed on the air before him and he moved his shoulders back and forth, as if shadowboxing. He told his stories in order to relive them, while Benny was always too aware of herself standing in front of a story, using it for high drama or



"Honey, I'm home!"

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sympathy. Pete was so straightforward, so without stratagems, so exactly as he appeared to be, that she kept searching him for dark complications. So far she'd found none. He was clear all the way through, like a glass of water.

Her mind busied itself with the notions of clarity and substance, the nearly mathematical concentration that thoughts of her work brought on. He had triggered in her some commotion regarding light, transparency, weight, air, and . . .

He was speaking again, and Benny returned her attention, a little guilty at neglecting him. "Isn't it weird," he said, "how the worst times make the best stories."

"These days," said Benny, "I want to know how the stories end first. Did you think you were going to die up on that mountain?"

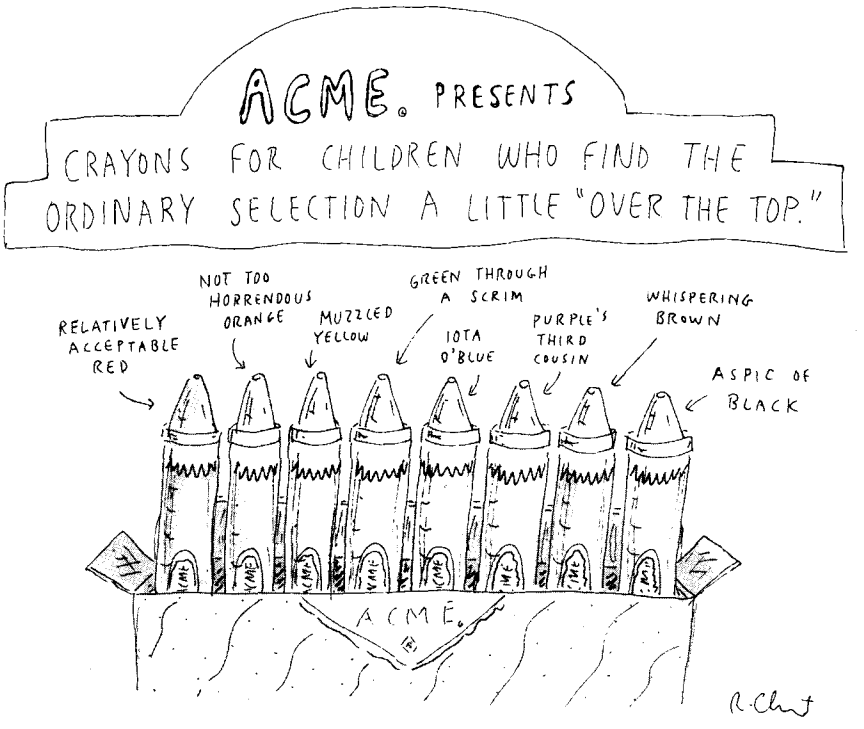
"Wasn't time to think about it," said Pete—a truthful but unsatisfactory answer. He was a scientist; he was getting an advanced degree in microbiology. There were times when he was all too empirical.

THE hotel in New Orleans was an eighteen-thirties town house restored to near-modern comfort. It had elegant stairways and a patio with ferns and palms dripping into a brackish pool. "Like it?" asked Benny. He had to like it. She couldn't stand it if he didn't. Panicked, she realized he would have to like the whole city, everything about it, in proper measure.

"It's perfect," said Pete. "It reminds me of an old movie house."

"Lie down with me for a minute," said Benny. She couldn't say a word more. These days tides of feeling either ripped through her at unpredictable moments or dropped her like a poleaxed cow. Once she'd even fainted at a party, which was embarrassing but not as bad as it could have been. She had been sitting at a table, and slumped heavily into her leaning arm. It felt like falling for miles through black space lit with whistling stars. There were times with Pete when Benny wondered if she was in love or suffering neurological distress, or if the two were akin.

Later, they sat in an oyster bar, looking out from the shadowed interior, with its sweat-polished wooden chairs and tables and revolving fans



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and humid frying smells, to the bright street. The sun flattened everything, like an abstract painting—white cement and masonry squares, black oblong shadows. Pete wanted to see the river, so they strolled through the tourist crowds and portrait painters and street musicians and a rank of carriages and the patient mules wearing straw hats, past the stores selling pralines and fluorescent necklaces and mammy dolls and T-shirts and edible underwear, out to the Decatur Street walkway and a view of the brown water. As always, the river made Benny think of soap and metals. The Father of Waters. The National Sink. "It's all sort of like a big, sleazy Disneyland, isn't it," said Pete. Benny was glad that he seemed amused by the sleaze, or at least that he didn't think less of her for it.

They were holding hands, a little self-consciously because they'd never done it before. Back home, the layers of gloves and mittens had made it seem pointless, and they had not known each other in any other season. Pete's hand curled in hers like a pet, or a child's. Benny had a sudden unwelcome vision of her son, Marcus, a fifteen-year-old who lived with his father, in Arizona, and did not like her much anymore. When he was a little boy he'd clung to her in crowds, hobbling her knees and crying wetly into her legs. She remembered his weight in her arms the way a mouth remembers tasting.

Now his child's terrors had grown a sullen hide, and he disapproved of his mother for being handsome and quirky and accomplished. That is, for everything others admired, as well as for liking to drink and divorcing his father and enraging him with her every word. Sometimes he shouted at her, things like "Jesus, do you have to laugh like that?" At one time he'd fitted inside her like the meat of a walnut; now everything he did and thought and said was in perfect opposition to her. When Pete no longer wished to touch her, she'd know it right away. How that felt.

This time the dizziness began in her skin. She was sweating everywhere all at once. Her legs stopped moving. It seemed she could not sweat and walk at the same time. Her hand fell to her side and she closed her eyes, feeling herself majestically tall and toppling, a tree about to be felled. "Timber," she said, or tried to say. She could still see the image of the street imprinted behind her eyelids, reversed like a negative, black with exploding white spots.

Then the moment passed, and she heard "Ben?" She righted herself. Pete was steering her toward a chair at an open-air café; she wanted to tell him it was one of the bad, overpriced

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ones. There were tears in her eyes, called up along with her skin's weeping.

"I was thinking of Marcus," she said for an explanation, not wanting to go into her confusion of feelings. "When I saw him at Christmas he'd shaved the sides of his head. There were cigarette burns on the backs of his hands, and he was wearing an army jacket—a camouflage jacket—with no shirt underneath. I swear he had make-up on, black stuff under his eyes. This is only the part of him that *shows*. What do you think he actually *does*?"

"What? Slow down. Don't try and talk."

"He's disfigured himself so I won't love him. He thinks that'll do it."

She did stop talking then. The sadness leadened her mouth. She understood entirely why her son had to try to separate himself from her. Her love for him could stop her in her tracks in the street, and had turned him into a scarred freak. She could never restrain it, keep it damped down, contained, channelled—her love a network of spiky veins, a river of blood spilling over its banks.

She told Pete the sun had got to her. She was fine now, just tired. She smiled her tired smile. Pete was studying her, as he did on occasion, with the same face he must use for peering into microscopes. She was so far outside his previous experience that she might as well be an escapee from a bestiary. She saw that he was making allowances for her, deciding not to worry yet. And surely there was nothing to worry about, just these little blips of dread and foreboding, age, loss, death, change of life, end of life, hysteria, brain tumor. Calamity descending as blinding light or blinding dark, as heat or blizzard. She grinned it all down. It was true that she was tired.

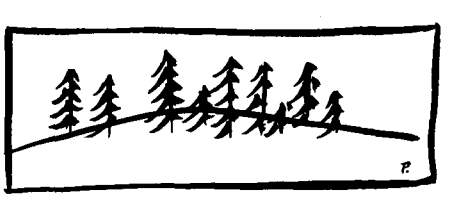
And by evening, after a nap, she felt much better. At dinner in the superlative restaurant she gobbled happily through the expensive menu. "Will you still love me when I'm fat?" Benny asked, and Pete, smiling, said he'd think about it. She wanted to remember everything forever, except you never did, and that was what her art was for her—the thing that kept you from dying entirely because it forgot nothing.

Afterward they wandered mazily outside, through a courtyard of azaleas and shaggy climbing vines, the mingled smells of swamp, river, ocean. On the streets, crowds circled and shuffled. Benny and Pete circumvented a man carrying a tuba wrapped in duct tape, and, farther on, an old woman dressed in a silver motorcycle helmet and a trailing witch's gown. Her long white hair hung down beneath the helmet like something spilled.

Benny threw her head back to the sky. She was at least a little drunk. She imagined aiming herself straight up like a rocket. She said, "I have had to invent my whole life out of nothing. I mean I didn't have a clue. A sculptor, what was that? It was the last thing on my mind. Nobody tells you how to be a madwoman who hangs out in foundries. Or lugs around acetylene torches and won't stay married. Nobody tells you how to live that kind of a life."

"What?" said Pete. He was looking out at the crowds as he walked, giving her the edge of his attention. "Well, it all paid off, didn't it?"

He meant, reasonably, her commissions, grants, reviews, credentials. All the things that validated her, that could be produced on demand. "No," Benny said. "I mean my *life*." She was



RED HOUSE

Malevich painted you. Can I come in?
I'm on the outside, floating in the void,
trying to name what curdles (milk? wheat? cloud?)

and laps at your foundation like foam.
You have three small white chimneys but not one
window, unless your windows face the sea,

if that is sea there. Lighthouse; tower; friend
planted precisely where the black horizon
unrolls its ribbon under pasty sky,

I wished to settle all
accounts and shut the book.
No, reach and never turn the final page

where—sturdy, poker-faced,
sunset-stained to russet—you were standing.
I had walked toward you through a wolfish wood.

I had swum a shark-infested sea
to reach you at that edge
where human constructs dwindle to a verge

and questions like who made you,
responsive to what vision, when, and why
evaporate to mere biography.

But on that day
when my lips and hands stop skittering
and they can scoop my vision of the good

out of its hidden niche behind my eyes,
I hope you, tall old house, are what they see,
silent sentry at extremity,

facing the uneasy elements,
your eyes, your windows shrouded with salt spray,
or windowless but still awash with light.

—Rachel Hadas

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a rocket, a neon dragonfly, she was in a nearly oracular state of drunkenness. "You are the most beautiful creature. Hush, you are. Throwing caution to the winds here: do you know I've been menstruating for longer than you've been alive?"

He was waiting politely for her to stop laughing. Benny thought it served him right to be embarrassed; he deserved it for being a man and always making too much sense. That seemed funny also. "Let's head out on the town now," she said. "Let's mix it up."

THE next morning, Benny woke up with a hangover that aged her ten years. Her eyes fell open to a blurred view of Pete's untroubled shoulder rising out of the humid sheets. She had spent some measurable portion of her life watching men sleep, as if their sleep were a code that could be cracked with patience. In the bathroom, she applied hot and cold water, aspirin, mouthwash. She looked brittle and postoperative. She left a note for Pete and went out in search of coffee. It was early, not yet eight. Workers were hosing down the sidewalks, which smelled of bleach and garbage.

Shakily, inhaling coffee steam, Benny concluded that she had to stop drinking so much, talking so much. She needed prudence, the middle ground. Some balance between caution and fear, love and death, weight and nothingness—already she was confusing things. She would watch her drinking.

That afternoon they sat on the hotel patio, under the shabby palms, yawning over the newspapers. The air was so warm and dank that it was nearly molten. Pete, too, felt hung over and convalescent, which cheered Benny some.

The hotel's proprietor, a juiceless old man in bedroom slippers and with a belly like a cantaloupe, stopped by their table to determine if they were worth being nosy about, or if they were exactly what he thought they were. He had one of those puddingy Southern accents, the kind that always sounded fake to her—too much like the movies, except it was the real thing. Pete was polite to him, as he always was to annoying people, or maybe he did not find them as annoying as Benny did. She sat behind her sunglasses, not bothering to talk. She thought the old man's curiosity was natural. She tried to see the two of them, her and Pete, the way other people must. They were like one of those puzzle pictures that shifted perspective each time you looked. Were they mother and son, or lovers, or something else entirely? One or both of them was always throwing the image off, putting it out of focus, looking too old or too young. Some haze of sex surrounded them, interfering with radar.

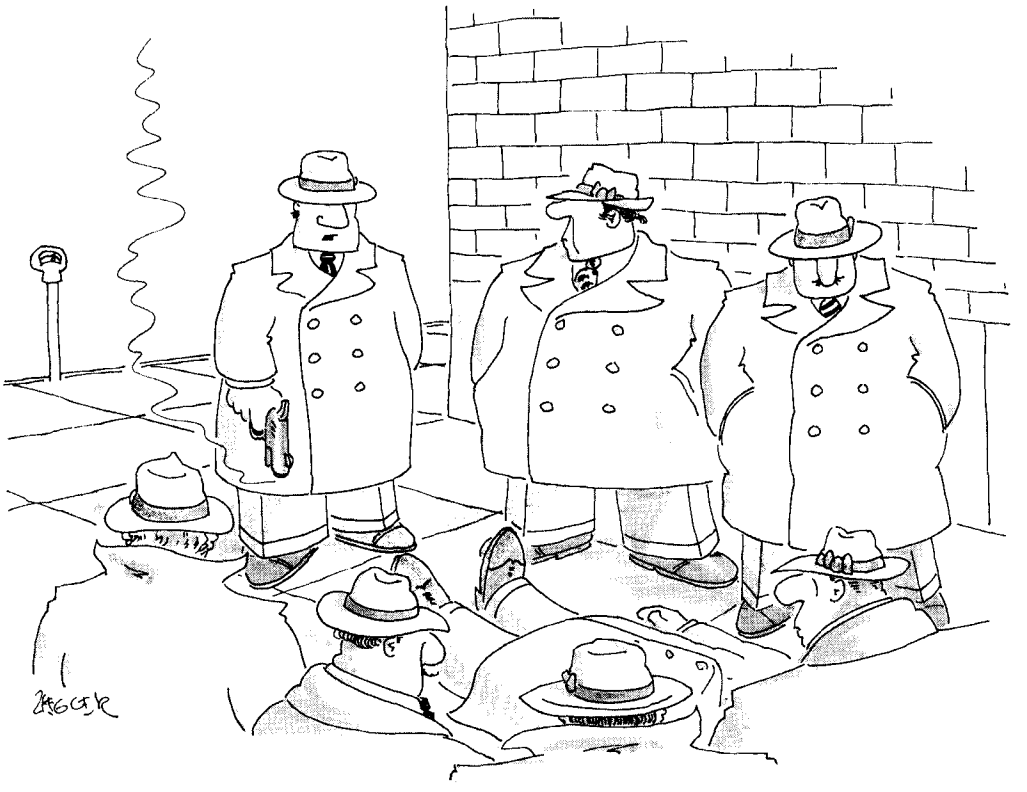
The landlord, having asked them all the pointless questions he could think of regarding weather and travel and sightseeing, limped off, disappointed. Benny yawned. The air was milky with humidity. "Old nuisance."

"He's harmless."

"I don't like being gawked at."

"You just don't like it from close up."

Benny glanced over at him, trying to decide if she had to take offense at that; she decided he had only been funny. "What is it you like about me anyway? I bet all your other girls were cheerleaders."



"Were our business legitimate, gentlemen, this would be considered legal."

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"You're wrong about everything," said Pete, unperturbed.

THE next day was their last full one in the city. There were the plantation tours and swamp tours and cemetery tours, but all they had to do was mention them to run out of energy. Pete surprised her by saying he wanted to go to the aquarium. It was a new, state-of-the-art aquarium, with hundreds (or perhaps it was thousands) of species, instructional exhibits—the works.

"Won't it be crowded?" Benny asked. The thought of massed bodies and galloping children made her feel languid, but she was curious about the things that excited Pete. Sometimes she missed a certain intensity in him. He was so even-tempered as to seem phlegmatic—at least by comparison to herself, though herself, she noted, was hardly the norm. Whatever core there was in Pete was everywhere displayed, like the heart of light itself.

The aquarium was a marvel, she had to admit, a fish palace made of echoes and glass and space. There were grottoes and great halls of arching concrete, filtered sunlight and blue

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"You will have a nice day."

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underwater glow. The air held whiffs of kelp, mold, and brine. The crowds were just as bad as Benny had imagined. They pressed you up against the glass like the fish bumping the edge of their tanks, so that there were two habitats, one air, one water, carved out of the same space. Certainly it made her feel creaturelike and edgy to be so jostled along.

A transparent tunnel had led them from a gift shop to the first exhibit. Overhead, fish cruised in the glassy span: darting flickers of yellow and purple, like underwater parrots. Rays with flattened mouths, flopping turtles. Light bubbled through the glass and water, dazzling her. With an effort, Benny squinted upward, wondering what it was about this place that so oppressed her. Claustrophobia? Or so much furious, thrashing life on both sides of the glass?

Pete read every exhibit label, unlike Benny, who kept pushing in and out of line, looking for places to sit down. She knew he wouldn't mind if she wandered, or even acted uninterested, as long as she was there. She watched the jawfish, which were like big pale goldfish, heaping up piles of pebbles, and the ugly blowfish with their blind-looking eyes. In a separate, freestanding tank, a school of blunt-faced, aluminum-colored fish swam round and round in a mad circle, as if in hectic pursuit. What was the point? she thought wearily. You thrashed about and declaimed and made mistakes, and then you made them all over again. You loved people too much or not enough. She couldn't remember ever feeling so tired in her life.

Pete joined her, giving the aluminum-colored fish his alert, clinical look, steering her toward the next hall. "The Amazon Rainforest," he read from the guide. "How are you holding up?"

"Fine," she said automatically. "The gift shop sells seafood cookbooks. Doesn't that strike you as sick?"

"If people want to eat fish they need to conserve the oceans. Makes sense."

"It's morbid."

"It's only food," said Pete lightly.

They gazed into a tank full of horrid, twining eels or giant worms—green, faceless, gouged mouths collapsing in on themselves. Benny couldn't catch her breath. The Rainforest room was a net of gray moisture. "These fish from around here?" she heard a plaintive voice ask from the crowd. Benny gritted her teeth. She was not going to give in to her body's disquiet, not here, where if you went down you might molder and rot, get pitched out in a black plastic bag.

She could go to a doctor when she went home and get her brain scanned, her fluids desalinated, her glands squeezed—have the kind of tests that make you feel you are being autopsied. There was a tank of surprisingly mild-looking piranhas; there were loops of snakes and tiny little poisonous frogs, like china figurines, black with turquoise mottles. Everything in the place could kill you. She would go to a doctor, who would tell her she was imagining things. But eventually doctors told you things you didn't want to hear—that you were dying and had been all along.

It cleared her head to think this, as if the world had slowed and emptied itself, as if she'd said, "So *what*," and were now free to move on to other matters. The world had become the space before her eyes, and she was suddenly attentive. A young man was leaning against a square of glass, and a shadow self reached out of the glass to him, joining hands. He couldn't see the reflection, but she could. He was looking into a tank of sharks, small, brown sharks like a pack of dogs. The sharks passed behind the reflected face; it wavered, then grew visible once more, holding steady. It seemed a remarkable sight to her, the beautiful shadow and the ugly fish existing in the same plane. Then the young man turned and smiled at her—his perfect smile. Pete, real once more.

Benny smiled back and pointed to the door. It was understood she would go on a little ahead.

She wanted to register everything: these children smudging the glass, that lovely flower-faced young woman dressed in white, the sort of young woman the young man would fall in love with someday. Penguins and electric eels, knife fish, flashlight fish, lumps of coral, mermaid's purses, paddlefish, alligators. Catfish and sturgeon, snakes and crawfish. All the creatures of the seas and mires. In her own body, from her throat down to her feet, she felt an itch and a flutter, as if the creatures swam and flopped and glided within her, too. Extraordinary feeling. She was full to the brim. When she walked she splashed. Tomorrow, driving home, wave after wave of spring would follow them north.

—Jean Thompson

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REPORT FROM UKRAINE

WERE it not for the grace of God and the machinations of the Soviet secret police, Yuri Shcherbak would have been born in Russia instead of Ukraine, and the final stage in the dissolution of the Soviet Union might have happened a little differently. Yuri Shcherbak is fifty-seven. He has iron-gray hair and a peasant's thick-fingered, heavy-chested body. Sixty years ago, when his parents, Mykola and Ofelia, were a young couple, the state ordered Mykola Shcherbak to leave his native Ukraine and work as an engineer in a factory in Rybinsk, a small Russian city about a hundred and sixty miles north of Moscow.

Around the same time, Joseph Stalin began forcing the Soviet peasantry to give up its land and join collective farms. Collectivization brought great hardship to the entire Soviet Union. In Ukraine, it verged on genocide. Stalin, for reasons that remain obscure, seemed intent not only on collectivizing the Ukrainian peasantry but on brutalizing it. According to figures reconstructed by Robert Conquest in his book "The Harvest of Sorrow," Stalin's agents in the Communist Party dispatched perhaps half a million of the most capable, prosperous Ukrainian farmers to the Siberian Gulag. Then Stalin sent teams of armed zealots into the countryside to requisition all the food they could find, including the peasants' seed grain. A terrible famine ensued, in which, Conquest estimates, six million Ukrainians perished. Yuri Shcherbak's paternal grandparents, who lived in a village in the fertile belt of black earth south of Kiev, starved to death. So did his maternal grandmother, who lived in Kiev. But in Rybinsk there was food, and Yuri Shcherbak's parents survived.

"Everyone liked my father. He taught mathematics in addition to working in the factory there. My parents used to entertain company, particularly the old intelligentsia," Shcherbak, a member of Ukraine's legislature, told me as we talked in his office in Kiev recently, recounting the story as he had heard it, many years later, from his mother. "In 1933, the N.K.V.D."—the predecessor of the K.G.B.—"came to my father and said, 'You have contacts with the engineering staff. You have to help us. You have to create an underground sabotage organization and persuade them to make an explosion, or something. We have to expose the enemies of Soviet power.' "

In those days, the N.K.V.D. often arrested "saboteurs" in Soviet mines and factories. Sometimes they were foreign engineers who had come to Russia in the twenties to help build Communism. Sometimes they were Russians—especially Russians who had come of age before the 1917 Revolution. The public trials of the "saboteurs," which always ended in convictions, demonstrated to the Soviet masses that the class enemy, within and without the Soviet Union, still intended to smother Communism in its cradle. The N.K.V.D. wanted Yuri Shcherbak's father to entrap people for a show trial.

"My father was sufficiently intelligent to know that this was a terrible provocation, and that he would be caught along with everyone else," Shcherbak recalled. "He refused. They asked him again, and he told my mother about it. She said, 'Let's get out of here right away, because it will be bad here. They will never forgive you for refusing to coöperate with them.' "

In the autumn of 1934, Mykola Shcherbak managed to move back to Kiev with his wife and his older son, also named Mykola. They found an apartment at the edge of the city, and a month or so later Yuri was born—a native Ukrainian who never became one of the many Russified Ukrainians living throughout the former Soviet Union.

The N.K.V.D., true to Ofelia Shcherbak's suspicion, remembered Mykola Shcherbak's refusal to coöperate. "About the time I was born, they arrested my father," Shcherbak told me. "He had started to work in a factory that made road equipment. They charged him with sabotage. And during the interrogations the investigator said, 'Why did you leave Rybinsk? Do you think we forgot about that?' My father understood that his arrest stemmed from that episode. But at that point someone interceded for him. He was saved by a big shot in the Party—an old Bolshevik who was a member of Lenin's guard. First, they changed it from a political case to a criminal case, and then they dropped it entirely. But it was such a heavy trauma for him that he fell ill with a very serious brain disease, and he started to lose his vision. He was an invalid for the last twenty-five years of his life."

As Shcherbak recalled his childhood, the fear that his family lived in kept intruding. "All his life, he was afraid of the N.K.V.D.," he said of his father. "My mother hated the Bolsheviks from the beginning, and he was very frightened for her. She had a

"Brandy, coffee, decaf, herb tea, or cran-apple?"

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sharp tongue, and she didn't restrain it. She was religious, and she went to church. My father was afraid to be seen at church, but he remembered the church holidays from his childhood as something very bright and beautiful. In the photo albums my parents had you'd see a photo of a group of people with a piece of it ripped off. Maybe someone in the group had been wearing a military uniform with epaulets. My parents were afraid that during a search the N.K.V.D. might find out there was a relative who had served in the White Army. They were very afraid."

A rational Ukrainian had much to fear in those days—a fact that was driven home to Yuri Shcherbak in 1948, when he was thirteen. His brother, Mykola, was by then a student at the state university in Kiev. Ever since childhood, Mykola had collected wildlife; at the university, he was studying zoology. In those days, Soviet power was not yet entrenched throughout Ukraine. In the western region, which had been a part of Poland until the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939, a Ukrainian nationalist guerrilla organization fought against Soviet control until the early nineteen-fifties, half-heartedly assisted by the British and American intelligence services. The secret police, consequently, established a broad network of informers throughout Ukraine, and dealt ruthlessly with any suggestion of dissent. The insurgent movement apparently had a cell among the students at the university in Kiev, and the police apparently had an informer in the cell.

Mykola Shcherbak, his younger brother recalled, knew about the nationalist organization, though he was not an active member. In the spring of 1948, an unmarked car stopped suddenly on the street next to Mykola, and some men jumped out, arrested him, and took him away to the secret-police headquarters in Kiev. A short time later, the police appeared at the Shcherbaks' apartment to search for evidence. "I remember it as if I were seeing it now," Yuri Shcherbak told me. "They were dressed in half-military uniforms, without epaulets. They showed us their credentials: the Ministry of State Security. We still have the protocol of the search."

The police found no concrete evidence, he recalled, but they needed none. "Several people said that they knew that my brother knew of such an organization's existence. He was convicted without a trial, by a special panel. He wasn't even present. They gave him seven years in a camp in Siberia, which for those times was a very light sentence. Others got ten or fifteen years."

His brother's conviction changed the way Yuri Shcherbak thought about Stalin and the Soviet system. Until then, he had half subscribed to the myth that Stalin was wise and good, and that underlings committed the awful crimes of the Soviet state without his knowledge. Afterward, Yuri feared the state and had no illusions about wisdom or goodness. In March, 1953, the state announced that Stalin lay ill. Russians of Shcherbak's age have told me that Stalin's final illness was an occasion of grief and alarm for them. In the Shcherbak household, it was not. Shcherbak's mother prayed for Stalin's death, in the hope that his passing would mean her son's liberation from the Gulag.

The thaw that Ofelia Shcherbak had prayed for came within a few years of Stalin's death. For many Russians who came of age in the mid-fifties, the thaw, which was led by Nikita Khrushchev, instilled a belief that Communism could reclaim the humanitarian ideals that had attended its birth—the belief that Mikhail Gorbachev acted upon when he came to power, in 1985. But Yuri Shcherbak's memories of the thaw were dominated by the circumstances of his brother's homecoming. "In 1955, when Khrushchev started to free the prisoners, my brother got an amnesty and he came home," he said. "When he came back, I didn't recognize him. He was sick with tuberculosis, and he had been beaten down. He was thin. And the most terrible thing was that he was afraid of everything. When we walked along the street, if a car came up suddenly and stopped he trembled, because that was how they had arrested him."

"I'm haunted by potential."

AS Shcherbak himself came of age, he told me, he did not hate Russians. He knew them too well. When the Germans occupied Ukraine during the Second World War, the state evacuated him and his family to Russia. He spent three years there, and he still

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remembers the kindnesses that the suffering Russians showed him. He revered Russian literature. His religious convictions came from his reading of Tolstoy. He differentiated between his feeling about the Russian people and his feeling about their creation the Soviet Union. He told me he never subscribed to the dogma that maintained that the various nationalities were blending into a new, Soviet nationality. He always felt Ukrainian, and he silently classified the Ukrainians who supported the regime as either Chekists (agents of the secret police) or dolts. "I was a fan of Dynamo Kiev," he said, referring to the local soccer team. "I never cared about the Soviet national soccer team, even though many Ukrainians played on it."

Fearful that his older brother's political problems would keep him from getting a higher education, Shcherbak's parents sent him to a trade school to become a nurse. He did so well there that he won the right to attend medical school, and he became a specialist in infectious diseases. Medicine did not quite satisfy him, so on the side he began to write. He published his first novel in 1965, while the thaw still affected Soviet literature. It was called "As at War," and it described the thoughts of a group of doctors quarantined in a laboratory with an unknown virus. The book did well. It was translated into several languages and was made into a film. But Shcherbak derived the most satisfaction from the fact that he wrote his book in Ukrainian, not in Russian.

For centuries, Russian had been the language of the educated classes in Ukraine, and Ukrainian had been considered a peasant dialect. "The cities in Ukraine were Russified," Shcherbak told me. "In Kiev before the Russian Revolution, maybe five educated families spoke Ukrainian—I'm exaggerating, of course. But there was no urban Ukrainian culture, just a folk culture. It was a peasant nation." Until the nineteen-sixties, he added, Ukrainian literature tended to deal with rural themes, because writers who used Ukrainian tended to be from rural areas. Shcherbak and his friend Vitaly Korotich, who went on to post-*glasnost* fame as the editor of the Moscow journal *Ogonyok*, were among the first to write about urban themes in Ukrainian. "We showed that it was possible for this sentimental, peasant language to describe modern, urban ideas," Shcherbak said. "Until that time, a lot of Ukrainians, including me, looked on Ukrainian culture as provincial and second-rate."

"Oh, nothing too exciting, Donna. I burned the toast last Wednesday, and on Saturday Jim split an infinitive. What's new with you?"

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Shcherbak, like several other Ukrainians I spoke with, felt that centuries of wars and repression, at Russian and Polish hands, had stunted the Ukrainians, leaving them less than they might have been if their country had been situated in a more fortunate part of Europe. "It was basically a matter of selection," he said. "Among the Ukrainians, there were various kinds of people. The people who were idealists of the highest order, who were strong and courageous, were the people who most often perished or got killed. In 1918, they fought the Bolsheviks, and most either died or emigrated. The Bolsheviks destroyed more of them with another wave of repression, beginning in 1925-26. In 1933, when they liquidated the *kulaki*"—prosperous farmers—"it was the least capable who were left." During the next decade, more purges followed.

Ukrainians who thrived in these years, he said, tended to come from the moral and educational dregs of the nation. "It was an artificial selection process, and the ones who came through were the most treacherous and insincere people, many of them primitive and uneducated. They knew nothing except full, unquestioning obedience to Moscow. The Ukrainian ruling class became a boorish élite. In matters of culture and politics, they were more repressive than their Russian overlords." In Ukraine, Shcherbak said, recalling a wan joke, the Party proudly overfulfilled its plan.

In 1985, when Gorbachev came to power, Shcherbak reacted skeptically to his promise of change. "I had long since stopped believing in any Communist leader," he told me. "It was a discovery when I first heard him. It was spring—May, I think—and I was in Moscow, drinking cognac with a

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friend at his apartment. The TV was on. We were chatting, and suddenly my friend said, 'Wait a minute, wait a minute,' and turned up the sound. And I began to hear. Gorbachev said some exciting things. It was all very intelligent. Then I started to listen to all his speeches. But for a long time I didn't believe him. I figured, This is a fraud, and that's all. Then practical changes started to happen. There was a weakening of control. I decided that this was our only hope, that he had to be supported. Otherwise, he'd wind up like Khrushchev. I understood that this was my last chance in life, that I had to say something, to seize the moment. I started to support him actively and, in fact, I sincerely believed him."

Yuri Shcherbak's unsullied enthusiasm for *perestroika* lasted until April 26, 1986, when the nuclear reactor at Chernobyl, seventy miles north of Kiev, exploded. A plume of radioactive debris billowed from the reactor into Ukraine, neighboring Byelarus (then still called Byelorussia), and across Europe. The Ukrainian government said nothing publicly about this catastrophe until after Swedish monitoring forced Moscow to disclose what had happened. Even then, the government in Kiev insisted that its May Day parade go on as scheduled, as if the radioactivity presented no danger to the population outside the immediate vicinity of the reactor.

"I wanted to get in there and see what had happened," Shcherbak recalled. "There were monstrous rumors in Kiev. I tried to get permission to go as a correspondent for *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, but they wouldn't let *Literaturnaya Gazeta* in there. So I went to our Minister of Health and asked him to send me as a physician. I went as part of a medical brigade to a hospital, not far from Chernobyl, where they were taking evacuees. I helped to evaluate them—to see who was ill, who was not ill. And I started to record my conversations with people and to think about writing an article. I wound up writing not about the reactor, or about the heroes who carried the red flag into Chernobyl. I couldn't do that, because they wouldn't let me. I wrote about the evacuated children, about the doctors, about the packages people sent, about the hospital. I realized that what was happening around Chernobyl was much more interesting—it was affecting millions of people. Chernobyl blew this empire to hell. It gave the lie to all the propaganda, because it showed that Soviet technology was worthless. The organization was bad. The ideological work was false. They had tried to fool their own people. All the flaws of the system came out in Chernobyl."

I asked why there had been no discernible political unrest at the time of the accident. In response, Shcherbak drew a curve on a piece of paper. It ascended abruptly, dropped sharply, then began gradually ascending again, and reached a level much higher than the original upward curve. "Here's the nuclear explosion," he said, pointing to the first part of the curve. "And here's the peak of radioactivity, and here, after twenty days, it falls off rapidly. Then, gradually, the cesium becomes dominant in the environment, and the strontium, and so on." He traced the line toward the top of the paper. "At the time of the explosion and in the first year afterward, there were six hundred thousand 'liquidators'"—police, firemen, physicians, soldiers, and others who were involved, at least peripherally, in cleaning up after the explosion—"who received a dose of radiation of twenty-five rem." (This is a thousand times the radiation a person receives in a standard chest X-ray; the dosage considered immediately lethal ranges from five hundred rem to a thousand rem.) "The radiation will have serious consequences for their health. They are suffering the consequences now. And then there were a very large number of children who received an enormous dose of radiation in the thyroid gland. We now see in them cases of cancer, enlargement of the thyroid, and so on. And people living in these regions"—he pointed to a wall map, indicating a broad area of northern Ukraine and Byelarus—"are constantly accumulating more radioactivity in their organisms." The line on the paper—rising, dropping, and then steadily rising again—depicted the environmental consequences of the accident.

The political effects of Chernobyl mirrored the physical consequences, he went on to say. There was a burst of outrage, a sharp drop into quiescence, and then a steadily accumulating level of resentment as the health problems attributed to radiation multiplied. "It was striking how both the political echo and the human echo grew from year to year."

Bernard Schoenbaum

Shcherbak's articles on Chernobyl, which appeared in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* and a magazine called *Yunost*, won him a major journalism prize and made him a leader of the nascent environmental movement in Ukraine. At the end of 1986, he helped found a party called Green World. He told me, with some pride, that it was the first non-Communist political party in Ukraine since the K.G.B. wiped out the last of the nationalist guerrillas, in the early nineteen-fifties. In 1989, to his surprise, a group of factory workers nominated him to run for the Congress of People's Deputies, the new Soviet legislature. The elections that year suggested the transitional nature of the era. The Communist Party still dominated most districts in Ukraine and throughout the Soviet Union, but enough insurgents managed to win seats to give the Congress a significant

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minority of non-Communists. One of them was Yuri Shcherbak.

When Shcherbak arrived in Moscow for the Congress, in May of 1989, he recalled, he still believed in the possibility of reforming and revitalizing the Soviet Union. He helped to organize a group of reform-minded deputies, called the Inter-Regional Group, whose political mentor was Andrei Sakharov. "We adopted a resolution about the union," he told me. "It said that the Stalinist empire was falling apart and could exist no longer, and that the time had come to reëxamine the union treaty and on a new basis create a—well, we didn't call it a union, but that was the sense of it."

As we spoke, more than two years later, the disintegration of the union was almost complete. But Shcherbak believed that parts of it might have been saved if Gorbachev and his people had acted decisively in 1989 to decentralize the government and reform the economy. "We showed them the only path to salvation," he said. "If they had taken it, if they had got out in front of events, they might have done a lot better, although the union was doomed in some parts even then. Armenia and Azerbaijan were already out of control, and the Baltic states would have left in any case. But a new, decentralizing union treaty might have brought forth some moderate national forces. If they had begun a decisive economic reform then, the political energy might have been switched to the economy. They could have saved—" He did not finish the sentence.

Back in 1989, when Shcherbak and his reformist allies showed their ideas to Gorbachev's chief lieutenant in the Supreme Soviet, Anatoly Lukyanov, he had become angry and replied, "No! No! How could you do this?"

"They didn't pay any attention," Shcherbak recalled. "They played with us like a cat with a mouse. They really didn't want any reforms. Russia always behaves as a messianic great power. The Russians think that the world looks only to them."

In 1989, Shcherbak was not yet a secessionist. By the middle of 1991, he was. I asked him what had caused him to conclude that reform could not salvage the union.

"After I became a member of the Supreme Soviet, I learned about the extent of the financial catastrophe in Moscow," he answered. "I realized that Ryzhkov"—Nikolai Ryzhkov, the former Prime Minister—"was a criminal who ought to be put away. And Valentin Pavlov, his Minister of Finance. They've led us into an enormous financial catastrophe with the amount of money they've printed."

There was another reason for Shcherbak's conclusion. In June, 1991, he said, the chairman of the presidium of the Ukrainian legislature, a Communist named Leonid Kravchuk, decided that he wanted to give the public the impression that things were changing by adding an opposition figure to his Cabinet. Kravchuk invited Shcherbak to become Ukraine's Minister for Environmental Protection, and Shcherbak accepted. Once in office, he began to learn the full dimensions of the environmental damage wrought during seventy-odd years of submission to Moscow. Chernobyl was only one of many dangerous problems. Major cities—among them Sevastopol, home to the Soviet Black Sea fleet—had shortages of drinkable water, because the local water supplies were fouled with toxins. The average Ukrainian's life expectancy was six years shorter than that of the average citizen in the West. "I understood that what happened here happened because the leaders in Moscow behaved as if they were occupiers," he told me.

And there was a final, more personally alienating event. Mykola, Shcherbak's brother, had prospered in many ways in the years since he returned from Siberia. He had regained weight,

THE WEEKS SLIPPED QUIETLY BY, AND AUTUMN TURNED ONCE MORE INTO WINTER.

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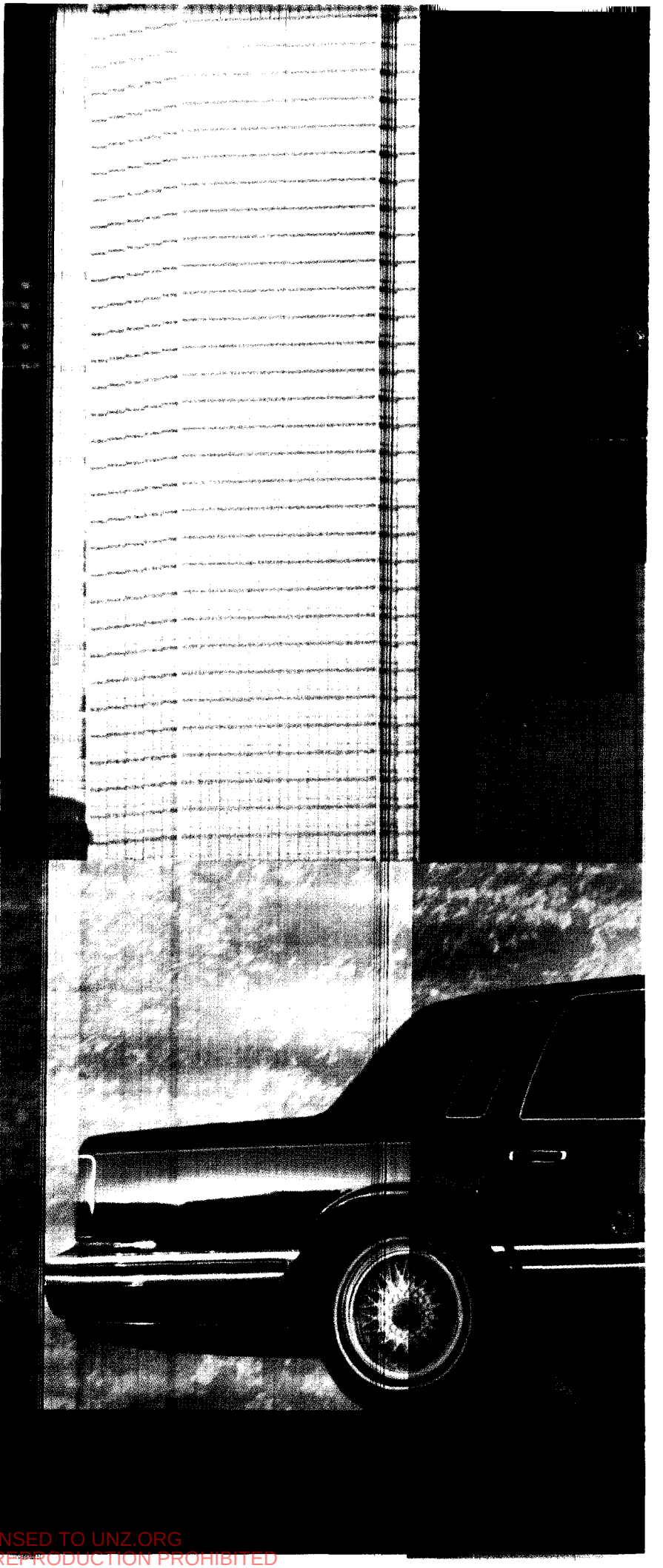

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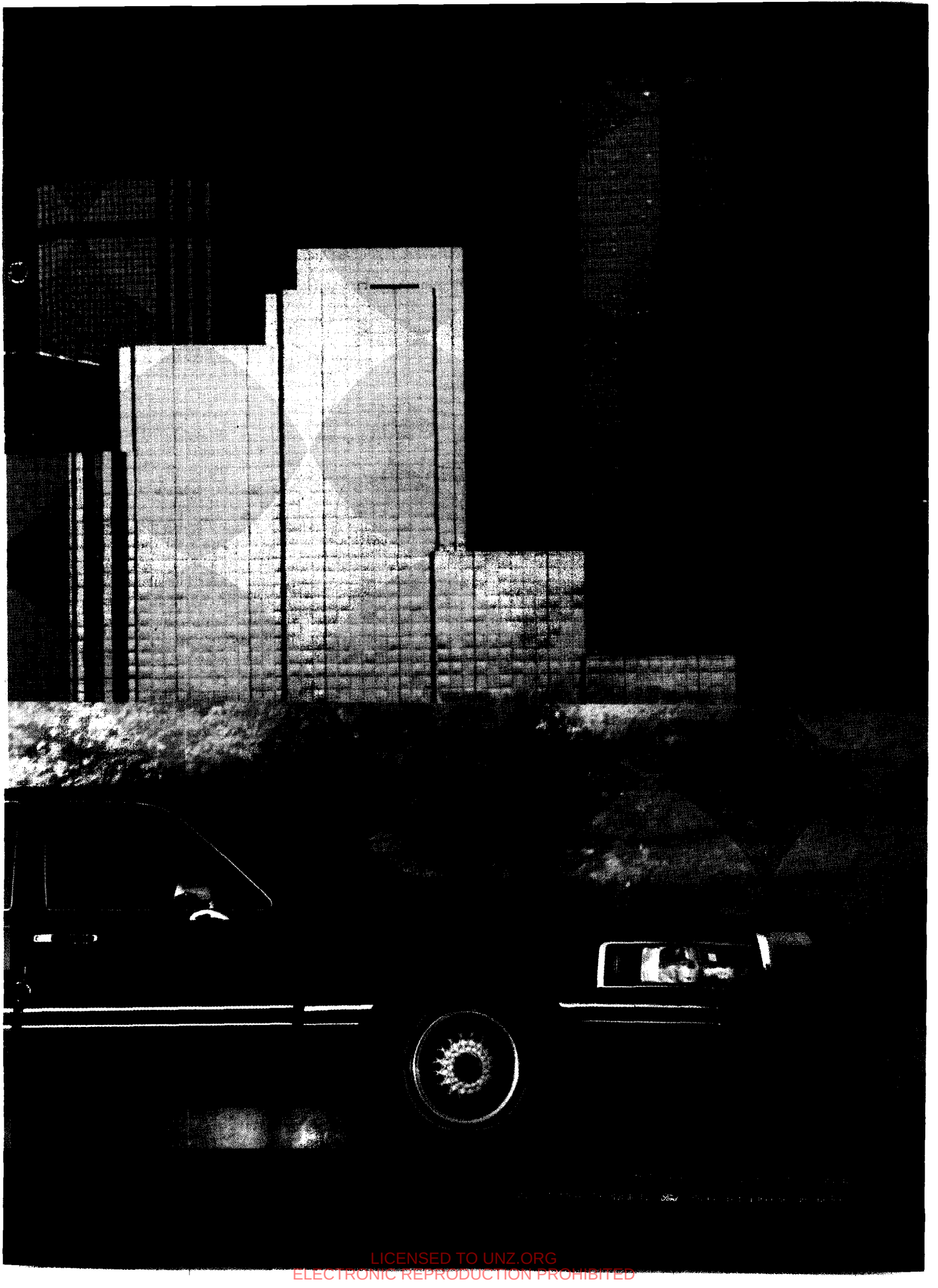

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"Perhaps we could find a way to redefine 'profit.'"

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finished his degree in zoology, and become a professor. But he had never received "rehabilitation"—the term, in Soviet parlance, for admission by the state that a person's conviction was unjust. As a result, certain honors, like membership in the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, were denied to him. After becoming a member of the Supreme Soviet, Yuri Shcherbak inquired in Moscow about rehabilitation for his brother. "I thought it would be automatic, since he had never been convicted by a court. I talked to the state procurator, and he said, 'Yes, of course. Give me his application.' " But instead of conducting a quick hearing and granting the rehabilitation Moscow sent a K.G.B. colonel to Kiev to conduct a new investigation. As Yuri Shcherbak recounted this, his voice for the first time in our conversation grew ragged and bitter. "They called as witnesses those people who were still alive, after forty years. And they came to the conclusion that my brother was correctly convicted! They used a 1927 law that made it a crime to know about something illegal and fail to report it. And they gave us a paper saying he couldn't be rehabilitated. I said to my brother, 'You know, this document will show that you're a decent man. You should be proud of it. You were a fool to want to be rehabilitated. What do you need their rehabilitation for, anyway?' "

On August 24, 1991, after the failure of the coup in Moscow—and, not coincidentally, the downfall of the Soviet Communist Party—Leonid Kravchuk suddenly announced his resignation from the Party and his conversion to the cause of Ukrainian independence. Thereupon, with only one dissent, the Ukrainian legislature voted in favor of a declaration of independence, subject to approval in a referendum to be held December 1st.

On August 26th, the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. convened in Moscow to discuss the coup and its aftermath. Gorbachev sat with the presidium, behind the speaker's lectern, in the well of the vast hall, and he rose to give the first major speech of the session. Even though several republics besides Ukraine had declared independence following the coup, Gorbachev was intent on saving the union, apparently hoping that the republics' declarations were essentially rhetorical. He tried to rally support for his draft union treaty—an agreement that would preserve at least some central control.

A few hours later, the time came for Ukraine to reply to Gorbachev's appeal, and the task fell to Yuri Shcherbak. Everyone in the Kremlin knew that Ukraine's response was critical. Without Ukraine's farmlands, a union could not hope to feed itself, and without Ukraine's mostly Slavic population, of fifty-two million, the Slavs remaining in a union might soon find themselves outnumbered by Muslims from Central Asia. Yuri Shcherbak hastily translated into Russian the resolution that the Ukrainian legislature had adopted two days before: "The Supreme Soviet of Ukraine solemnly declares the independence of Ukraine and the creation of an independent, Ukrainian state." Then he walked to the well of the hall and read the resolution.

"There was dead silence, a terrible silence," Shcherbak recalled, not without a hint of satisfaction at the memory. "In the middle of my speech, Gorbachev stood up and walked out."

GORBACHEV'S distress at hearing this reiteration of Ukraine's determination to secede was understandable. Most of the other restive Soviet nationalities—from the Estonians, on the Baltic, to the Kirghiz, on the Chinese border—were, from the Russian point of view, alien peoples incorporated into the empire of the czars and inherited by its successor, the Soviet Union. But the Ukrainians and the Russians had entered written history together, in the ninth century, in a Slavic state known as Rus, with its capital in Kiev. Kievan Rus fell to Mongol invaders from the east in 1240, and the Ukrainians spent the ensuing four centuries under the domination of the Mongols, then Lithuanians, and, finally, Poles. The western part of Ukraine remained under Polish or Austrian control until 1939, when Stalin seized it. The eastern part of the country was wrested from Polish control by a Ukrainian revolt in 1648, and in 1654 the Ukrainians turned to Russia for protection. The two Slavic peoples embarked on a union that would last, with some interruptions, for more than three centuries.

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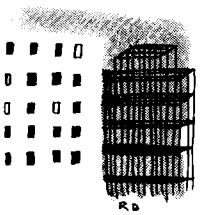
From the beginning, though, the Ukrainians and the Russians perceived their union differently. The Russians saw the incorporation of Ukraine as a natural step in the process of reconstructing the state torn apart by the Mongols. They reacted to Ukrainian claims to a separate nationality with condescension or complete denial. They called Ukraine Little Russia, and the Ukrainians Little Russians. (Ukraine, which means "on the periphery" in the Slavic languages, came into use as the territory's name only toward the end of the nineteenth century. Before that, neighboring countries generally called the Ukrainians Rusyns or Ruthenians.) In 1863, a minister of the czar decreed that the Ukrainian language (which in its present form is about as closely related to Russian as Portuguese is to Spanish) "never existed, does not exist, and shall never exist." In the official view, people who spoke Ukrainian were using a corrupted peasant dialect of the mother tongue.

This opinion persists among Russian nationalists to this day, although most of them sense that it would no longer be quite politically correct to refer to the Ukrainians as Little Russians. The view of contemporary Ukrainian nationalists (and at the moment nationalism is more or less the official ideology) is quite different. Russia, they believe, has spent the centuries since 1654 continuously violating an agreement that promised to respect Ukraine's autonomy. The Ukrainians (except, in this view, for the lumpen elements coöpted by the Communist Party) have spent these centuries resisting as best they could.



As soon as the old Russian Empire began to collapse, in 1917, Ukrainian nationalists established a central Rada, or council, that rapidly asserted itself as the government of a free Ukraine. But the Rada lacked both money and an army. The country quickly descended into chaos as Ukrainian warlords, the Russian White Army, and the Bolsheviks marched murderously back and forth over it. In 1921, the Bolsheviks finally prevailed. During the Communist years, to judge from the distribution of patronage, Ukraine functioned as a junior partner in the Soviet system, not as equal as Russia but more equal than the republics of Central Asia, the Transcaucasus, or the Baltic. A Ukrainian generally occupied one of the dozen or so seats on the ruling Politburo. These Ukrainian Communists tended to be, if anything, more rigid and dogmatic than their Russian counterparts. The Ukrainian Communist Party leader in 1968, Pyotr Shelest, led the Politburo faction that pushed for the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Vladimir Shcherbitsky, who led the Ukrainian Communist Party from 1972 until 1989, had a reputation as a fierce oppressor of dissent and as a stolid conservative, in the image of his patron, Leonid Brezhnev.

Nationalist politics came later to Ukraine than to some of the non-Slavic Soviet republics. In Armenia and the Baltic states, environmentalists' protests led almost immediately to the formation of popular movements that soon became pro-independence parties. In Ukraine, a couple of years elapsed between the formation of Yuri Shcherbak's Green movement and the creation of a purely political organization. "There were several reasons for that," I was told one day in November by Ivan Drach, a Ukrainian writer. For one thing, Drach explained, the Ukrainian intelligentsia had closer ties to the Russian Communists who launched *perestroika* than the intellectuals in other republics had. Drach's career provided a good example. He got part of his higher education in Moscow during the thaw of the Khrushchev years, and worked as an organizer for the Communist Youth League while attending the university. He joined the Party and waited for the day when it would adopt the reforms that Khrushchev had bumblingly initiated. But the Party in Ukraine proved highly resistant to reform. Gorbachev did not get around to dismissing Shcherbitsky until late in 1989. "Shcherbitsky was useful to Gorbachev in Ukraine, because he knew how to keep control of things, and he didn't allow liberal democratic movements," Drach said.

By 1989, though, Shcherbitsky and the local Party no longer had complete control. An amnesty had recently released a number of prisoners whom Shcherbitsky's regime had long since packed off to Siberia for nationalist agitation. Two of them were Vyacheslav Chornovil and Levko Lukyanenko, who had spent fifteen and twenty-seven

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years, respectively, in Soviet prisons, and these two joined forces with some Kiev intellectuals—including Drach, who was by then a leader of the Ukrainian Writers' Union—to form Rukh (Ukrainian for "the movement"). The organization held its founding congress in September. Drach recalled, "Representatives of the K.G.B. came up to us and said, 'Look around. You have three thousand delegates. We have fifteen thousand people surrounding you.' And, in fact, there were paddy wagons all around." But the movement was by then too big to stop, and the Rukh congress proceeded. Drach became its chairman.

The Ukrainian Communist Party did not crumble in the face of this opposition, as the Parties in republics like Lithuania and Armenia had done. Instead, it began to advocate political sovereignty for Ukraine—a muddled concept that tried to straddle the nationalists' call for independence and Moscow's demand for preservation of the union. In a reasonably open and competitive election in March, 1990, the Party won three-fourths of the seats in the republic's legislature. A year later, in a union-wide referendum on the future status of the Soviet Union, the Party's position again prevailed. More than seventy per cent of the Ukrainian voters responded favorably to a question posed at Gorbachev's initiative: "Do you consider necessary the preservation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a renewed federation of equal, sovereign republics, in which the rights and freedoms of an individual of any nationality will be fully guaranteed?" The Ukrainian legislature, at the suggestion of the Communist leadership, added a second question: "Do you agree that Ukraine should be part of a Union of Soviet Sovereign Republics on the basis of the declaration on the state sovereignty of Ukraine?" More than eighty per cent of the voters said yes to that question—a result that muddied whatever meaning the referendum might have had.

The Party had by that time produced a new leader for Ukraine—Leonid Kravchuk, the chairman of the presidium of the legislature. Kravchuk, who is now fifty-seven, has carefully barbered silver hair and the jowly, florid face of a man who for a long time has not had to stand in line for meat. He likes to wear double-breasted suits, which give him the look of a Chicago politico of the thirties. Kravchuk spent the Brezhnev years and the first four Gorbachev years as a functionary in the Ideology Department of the Communist Party in Kiev. He was the man, Yuri Shcherbak recalled, who telephoned newspaper editors to berate them if the portrait of Brezhnev they printed on their front pages was too small. Vitaly Korotich, who, in the pre-*glasnost* era, was the editor of a Ukrainian magazine devoted to translations of foreign literature, remembers Kravchuk as the man who handed down the list of acceptable and unacceptable foreign writers. The list, Korotich recalled, banned Saul Bellow ("a Zionist") but approved of E. L. Doctorow (on the ground that he portrayed the struggle of the working class).

Kravchuk inherited the leadership after Gorbachev oversaw the removal of Shcherbitsky and then called Shcherbitsky's successor, Vladimir Ivashko, to serve in Moscow. Once in power, Kravchuk continued the Party's policy of straddling the independence issue: he talked of sovereignty to appease the nationalists, and he talked of staying in some form of union to appease Moscow. He managed to stay astride the fence until August 19, 1991, the first day of Moscow's aborted coup.

The leaders of some of the republics immediately and unequivocally condemned the coup. Kravchuk held a wet finger up to the wind and all but endorsed it. Speaking to Moscow television, he said, "What happened was bound to happen. . . . The situation could not remain as it was—a situation without power, when the center was in no condition to rule." He noted with satisfaction that Ukrainian workers were continuing to do their jobs. Only when the coup unravelled, and it became clear that Communists everywhere were in jeopardy, did Kravchuk turn against the plotters. On August 24th, he declared that he had renounced his Party positions on August 19th—something he had not chosen to reveal when the coup still looked as if it might succeed. Also on August 24th, while crowds outside the legislature chanted, "Shame on Kravchuk!" he and his Communist allies experienced a battlefield conversion to the cause of secession. By the end of the day, the legislature had voted overwhelmingly for independence, passing the resolution that Yuri Shcherbak read in front of Gorbachev. The declaration had one condition: approval in the referendum on December 1st. The legislature added another item to that ballot: the direct election of a President. Krav-

HERE

The sun that silvers all the buildings here
Has slid behind a cloud, and left the once bright air
Something less than blue. Yet everything is clear.
Across the road, some dead plants dangle down from rooms
Unoccupied for months, two empty streets converge
On a central square, and on a nearby hill some tombs,
Half buried in a drift of wild grass, appear to merge
With the houses at the edge of town. A breeze
Stirs up some dust, turns up a page or two, then dies.
All the boulevards are lined with leafless trees.
There are no dogs nosing around, no birds, no buzzing flies.
Dust gathers everywhere—on stools and bottles in the bars,
On shelves and racks of clothing in department stores,
On the blistered dashboards of abandoned cars.
Within the church, whose massive, rotting doors
Stay open, it is cool, so if a visitor should wander in
He could easily relax, kneel and pray,
Or watch the dirty light pour through the baldachin,
Or think about the heat outside that does not go away,
Which might be why there are no people there—who knows—
Or about the dragon that he saw when he arrived,
Curled up before its cave in saurian repose,
And about how good it is to be survived.

—Mark Strand

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chuk immediately became the leading candidate.

In Moscow, Boris Yeltsin's Russian government inadvertently helped persuade many Ukrainians that independence was the right choice. On August 26th, Yeltsin's press secretary said that if Ukraine wished to become independent Russia reserved the right to discuss a revision of borders. Everyone in both republics understood the reference at once. The present territory of Ukraine, particularly along the border with Russia, includes a number of areas where Russians, or Russian speakers, are the majority. In the days when all policy emanated from Moscow, this situation made little difference. But now, with power shifting to local and republic governments, it might make a considerable difference to, say, Russian coal miners in the Donbas region of Ukraine whether that region belonged to Ukraine or to Russia. The statement issued in Yeltsin's name raised the possibility of conflicts analogous to the nasty war being fought by Serbs and Croatians in Yugoslavia.

The next day, Yeltsin's government revoked the statement, calling it a mistake. Yeltsin sent a delegation led by his vice-president, Aleksandr Rutskoy, to Kiev to assure Kravchuk that Russia had no intention of claiming any Ukrainian territory. (The confusion arose, a well-placed member of the Russian government told me afterward, because of a debate among Yeltsin's advisers over how to respond to Ukraine's declaration of independence. Some advisers had indeed wanted to raise the issue of border adjustments, and the press secretary mistakenly thought that their views had prevailed.) The meeting between Kravchuk and Rutskoy defused the situation for the time being, but the episode served to remind everyone in Ukraine that before the Russians were Communists they had been imperialists, and that, despite Yeltsin's protestations, they might become imperialists again.

By September, no one of prominence in Ukraine was arguing the case for remaining in a union with a central government in Moscow. Once Kravchuk and the Party apparatus decided on independence, the Ukrainian media began promoting the new line as assiduously as they had once promoted the unbreakable fraternity of the Soviet peoples. A Ukrainian-American organization arranged for an American

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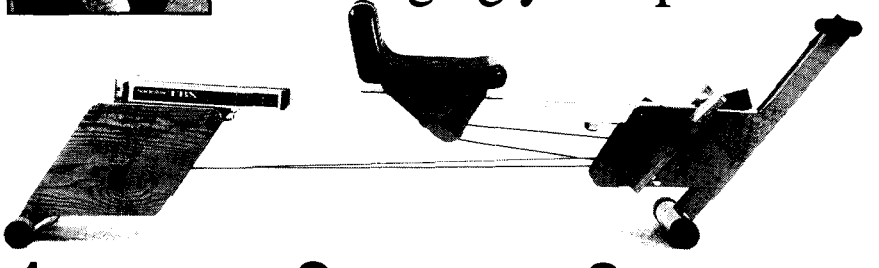

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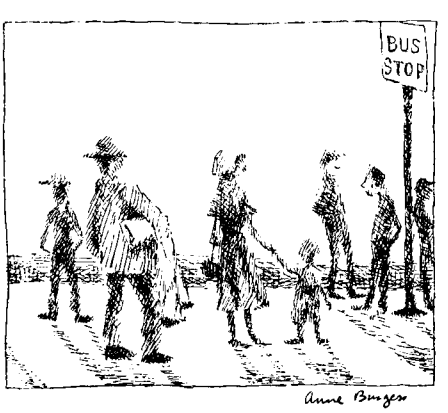
television-production crew to come to Ukraine and film a series of commercials designed to sell the idea of independence to Russians in Ukraine. Ukrainian television accepted the commercials and promised to play them often, at no charge. No one made commercials promoting the alternative. Seven candidates were on the Presidential ballot (each had collected a hundred thousand signatures on nominating petitions), and they all advocated independence. The debate in the campaign focussed on finer points. Kravchuk, who before August had suggested that Ukraine should sign some kind of loose union treaty, now took the position that the union-treaty effort was doomed, because it envisioned placing a state structure over the republics. The only union he would consider, he pledged, would be an economic union along the lines of the European Community. He might also, he added, support a collective-security arrangement with the erstwhile Soviet republics, with joint control of nuclear weapons, but he insisted on Ukraine's right to its own army. Supporters of Vyacheslav Chornovil, the Rukh candidate, and Levko Lukyanenko, who ran as the candidate of the Ukrainian Republican Party, complained, with some justification, that Kravchuk had preëmpted their platform.

Kravchuk accomplished this pirouette almost blithely. On an afternoon in late November, I went to hear him speak at Kiev's baroque state opera house on the occasion of the hundred-and-twenty-fifth birthday of Mykhailo Hrushevsky. Back in 1906, Hrushevsky, a historian, had first challenged the imperial Russian view of a shared past of the Ukrainians and the Russians, putting forward the idea that the Ukrainians were a distinct nation. In the chaotic months after the Russian Revolution, he had served, briefly, as President of Ukraine. Once the Bolsheviks came to power, he went into exile. He returned to Ukraine in 1924, but his works and ideas were banned, and he died in political disgrace in 1934. With the turn of events since August, however, Hrushevsky was back in style. His portrait, framed in bunting of pale blue and yellow—the colors of the Ukrainian flag—hung over the stage of the opera house much as Lenin's portrait would have hung amid red bunting in Communist days. At the appointed hour, Kravchuk and his Cabinet strode onstage and took their seats, facing the audience. There was polite applause. Kravchuk then rose to deliver his speech from a lectern, in much the same way that I had seen Soviet speakers rise to deliver speeches in honor of Lenin's birthday or International Women's Day, or any of the other holidays of the old order.

"The dramatic history of our nation, like every nation, has giants whose names will never be forgotten," Kravchuk said, speaking in a flat, droning voice. "One of them is Hrushevsky." He went on at length about the historian, his ideas, and the repression of those ideas. "We were told he was a reactionary. I myself witnessed how Hrushevsky's works were burned," he said.

I found it remarkable that Kravchuk could deliver this speech without once referring to, explaining, or apologizing for his own long service in the agency directly responsible for banning Hrushevsky and his ideas. Some of my Ukrainian acquaintances saw the irony, but they were prepared, a little cynically, to overlook it, given their concern for the future. "If we refused to vote for hypocrites, we couldn't elect a government, because we don't have enough people who sat in jails," I was later told by Natalia Yakovenko, a historian. "For the time being, we have no choice but to believe that, yes, these people"—former Communists, like Kravchuk—"have changed. And it seems to me that in this transition period Kravchuk and his people are better than the other choices. They know their opposition—other ex-Communists, like Yeltsin—very well. They know their way of thinking and acting. And I think we need a very careful leadership. Given how we are armed, any little spark of conflict could start us on a bloody course. So let them run the government for two or three years. I suspect that for the moment that serves the interest of Ukraine. The next time, we just won't elect them."



IN the months between August's declaration of independence and December's voting, Kiev took on a harried, improvisational air. Back in the days of Soviet power, republic capitals had been somnolent, bureaucratic places; their governments had only to carry out the directives they received from Moscow and take care to suppress any local dissidents. Looming independence forced the Ukrainians to confront a whole range of decisions, from how they would set up their new government to how they would fill its empty treasury.

One morning, I arranged to attend a meeting of the legislative commission that was reviewing the draft of a new Ukrainian constitution. It met in a fourth-floor room in an imposing gray granite building that had formerly housed the Communist Party Central Committee apparatus. The room had bare yellow walls that were somewhat paler where recently removed Party icons had hung. The commission consisted of about a dozen middle-aged men, half of whom spoke Russian; an elderly woman, who spoke only when issues of family policy arose; and a young American lawyer, John Hewko, dressed in a blue blazer, khaki slacks, and horn-rimmed glasses, from the firm of Baker & McKenzie, in Washington.

Hewko, an intense but affable man whose parents had fled Ukraine in front of the Red Army in 1943, grew up in Detroit and attended law school at Harvard. His firm sent him to the Soviet Union to help develop its business there, and he was clearly delighted by the opportunity. His work in Kiev was largely pro bono, and it made him, in effect, a founding father of his parents' country. In the mornings, depending on the day's calendar, he might help write the constitution. In the afternoons, he might advise commissions drafting new legislation. In the evenings, he might help review the contract of a Canadian firm that is supposed to print Ukraine's new currency. Sometimes, he told me, he let the left hand know what the right hand was doing. A day or two earlier, he had informed the legislature's foreign-affairs commission and the

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government's council of ministers that both were drafting a foreign-investment law, unaware of each other, and he had suggested that they might as well work together.

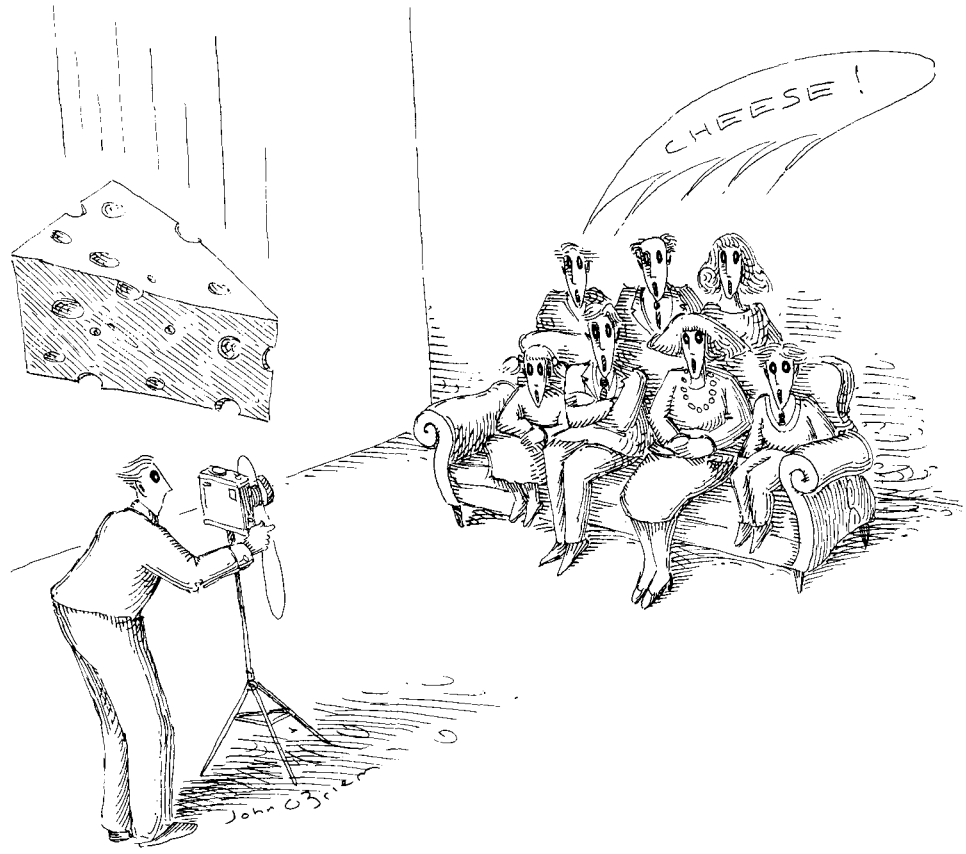
Hewko and I sat down as the discussion of the draft began. One deputy, an old Party man, wanted to know why the draft provided for only state and personal property, not collective property. Another wanted to know whether intellectual property, like computer software, should be covered by a constitutional provision. Someone else objected that the phrase enshrining the "sanctity" of private property sounded too religious. Suddenly, the conversation jumped to culture. A Russian-speaking deputy from Donetsk, Albert Korneyev, asked why Article 101 said that the government would "provide for" Ukrainian culture and "guarantee" the right of minorities to their own culture. Did that mean, he asked, that the government would fund Ukrainian schools, but that if the Russians in Donetsk wanted a university they would have to pay for it themselves?

"Precisely," affirmed the chairman, a Ukrainian named Leonid Yuzkov.

"That's nonsense!" Korneyev objected.

Before he could develop the point, two or three other deputies started shouting for attention. The one who shouted loudest, it turned out, wanted to talk about whether the proposed ban on party organizations in government agencies applied to the legislature itself. Someone jumped to his feet, moved preëmptively to the center of the room, and said that he had visited the German Bundestag, and it had party organizations, so why couldn't Ukraine? People shouted and pointed. The argument veered off into a discussion of weddings and family policy, and then it was time to break for lunch. The deputies had retained at least one tradition from the building's Communist days: they still had a lunchroom with short lines, hot sausages, and low prices. Lunch cost less than a ruble—the equivalent of about two cents at the prevailing exchange rate that day.

Though the morning session had resolved none of the issues raised, in the afternoon the deputies moved on to finer points of creating the national legislature that would replace the one in which they served. The draft provided for an upper chamber that, like the United States Senate, would have longer terms of office than the lower chamber. An argument immediately erupted. The deputy who had visited the German Bundestag again strode to the center of the room. "Democracy means equality!" he declared emphatically, demanding that deputies in the two chambers be elected for the same number of years.



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But that question, too, went unresolved. Very quickly, the discussion shifted to the name of each chamber.

"Tell me again what the French call their lower chamber, John," someone asked Hewko.

"The National Assembly," Hewko replied.

That seemed to please most of the deputies. Ukrainians, as they look around the map of Europe, wondering what their place and role might be, frequently feel that France is the country their own most closely resembles, since the two have roughly comparable land areas and populations. In the fall, during the legislature's debate about the size of Ukraine's future Army, someone erroneously stated that the French Army represented four-fifths of one per cent of France's population, and the deputies adopted that standard for Ukraine. Its Army, they determined, might have as many as four hundred and ten thousand soldiers.

THE prospective size of Ukraine's conventional forces does not worry most foreigners nearly as much as the disposition of the nuclear weapons that Ukraine stands to inherit from the former Soviet Union. According to the figures of Western specialists, the Soviet armed forces stationed roughly four thousand of its twenty-seven thousand nuclear weapons in Ukraine. Among them were more than twelve hundred warheads on long-range missiles, a few hundred on long-range bombers, and about twenty-five hundred short-range missile warheads and artillery shells. In the days immediately following the declaration of independence, Kravchuk stated that Ukraine had no desire to be a nuclear power. But as the summer turned to autumn it became clear that the West, to the extent that it cared to recognize and deal with Ukraine, was willing to do so precisely because Ukraine might become an independent nuclear power. Kravchuk accordingly modified his position in what appeared to be an effort not to squander whatever bargaining leverage the nuclear forces gave him. He

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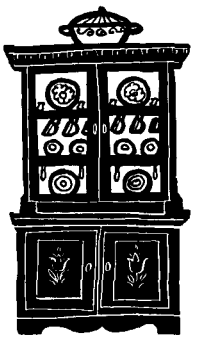
began to talk about obtaining command authority over the launching of the nuclear weapons on Ukraine's territory. He spoke of liquidating Ukraine's nuclear weapons, but as part of a comprehensive, East-West agreement. In mid-December, Secretary of State James Baker visited Kiev and, after meeting with Kravchuk, announced what appeared to be a swap: the United States would recognize Ukraine, and Ukraine would get rid of its nuclear weapons. But the bargain is not on paper, and work on it has just begun.



If the nuclear experts are to be believed, however, Ukraine cannot—at least, not immediately—aspire to be a nuclear threat in the same way that the former Soviet Union was. Intercontinental ballistic missiles are complex and delicate systems, and unless they are constantly maintained and repaired they break down and become unusable in a matter of weeks. Ukraine's new Ministry of Defense doesn't have the capacity to maintain the weapons. Kravchuk's desire to have a nuclear button of his own also falls short of a threat. As Soviet strategic missiles are now constructed, they require three separate permission codes before their commanders can launch them: from the national political leader, from the Minister of Defense, and from the chief of the general staff. Russia has assumed control of all three positions. If Kravchuk gets his own button, it would, presumably, mean that he, too, would have to issue a permission code in order to launch missiles based in Ukraine. This would amount to a veto over their use, rather than the ability to decide independently to fire them.

After listening to some of the Presidential candidates debate the issue, I felt that the more salient nuclear threat from Ukraine was the possibility that nuclear-weapons components and the expertise of people who knew what to do with them might leak clandestinely to other countries. One of the Presidential candidates was Ihor Yukhnovsky, a professor of physics and a member of the legislature's commission on science. According to Professor Yukhnovsky, Ukraine cannot independently manufacture nuclear weapons, but he estimates that Ukraine does about forty per cent of the manufacturing of Soviet nuclear weapons and, for the most part, ships components to Russia for final assembly. The weapons business, even though it is shared with Russia, is Ukraine's major hard-currency earner. And the financial condition of the country is such that there will be enormous pressure on it to maximize its income.

I spoke one morning with Oleksander Savchenko, the new vice-president of the National Bank of Ukraine. The bank is housed in an ornate pre-revolutionary building with a vaulted ground-floor room full of tellers' windows, where the government issued rubles in the days when the bank was a branch of the State Bank of the U.S.S.R., in Moscow. Savchenko, who is thirty-three, took no part in the operations of that era. He was an economist, working as the director of a research institute, until 1990, when a Ukrainian-American organization arranged for him to spend a year in the United States, studying government finance at Harvard and on visits to the New York Stock Exchange, the Department of the Treasury, and banks of the Federal Reserve. By the time he returned to Ukraine, its legislature had voted to create a national bank on the foundation of the old branch operation. Savchenko told me that since he was the only Ukrainian with any practical knowledge of how a central bank operated in a market system he had been recruited to help get the bank started.

The laws establishing the bank were part of the deluge of statutes passed in recent years by the legislatures of the former union and the former republics—statutes that had only a tenuous connection to reality. In this case, the bank's charter capital funds were set at two billion rubles and three hundred million dollars. I asked what assets the bank actually had when it got started.

"Absolutely none," Savchenko replied. "Unfortunately, there still aren't any except for rubles." And even rubles, he went on to say, were scarce. Russia controlled the presses that printed them, and for two months the Russian government had been refusing to send fresh supplies of currency to Ukraine. As the ruble notes in circulation wore out, the bank had nothing to replace them with. This presented a serious problem. The Soviet economy was a cash economy; without stacks of rubles, state enterprises could not meet their payrolls. To stave off disorder, Savchenko said, the government had been airlifting bales of rubles from western Ukraine, where the population was considered more nationalist and so more stable, to eastern Ukraine's mining areas, where the Russian-speaking miners were thought to be less reliable. Beginning in 1992, he said, the government would issue scrip. Sometime later, it hoped to begin issuing its own currency.

Ukraine had recently agreed, in principle, to take responsibility for about sixteen per cent of the eighty-billion-dollar Soviet foreign debt. That would mean, Savchenko calculated, making annual payments of about two billion dollars. I asked how much hard currency he thought Ukraine had, or could raise in an emergency. Savchenko replied that Ukrainian state enterprises had about half a billion dollars in hard-currency accounts in Moscow and a billion in illegal hard-currency accounts abroad, stashed there to protect it from Soviet taxes. He estimated that Ukrainian citizens had one and a half billion under their mattresses and perhaps a half billion in illegal accounts abroad. "It depends on the term," he concluded. "Inside of a month, we could raise maybe half a billion dollars. In six months, maybe three billion. But there's a problem. Physically, part of this money is in the State Bank for Foreign Trade in Moscow, and it may be bankrupt."

I asked Savchenko what Ukraine produced that might be exported to earn hard currency. "We sold almost a billion dollars' worth of electricity abroad in the last year," he said. (Recently, however, the Ukrainian legislature voted to shut down the Chernobyl nuclear station, so future power exports are uncertain.) "There was about two billion dollars' worth of raw materials, including uranium ore and unfinished things like steel," he went on. "A little meat, sugar, and salt. But the most important was weaponry."

IN the midst of the Presidential campaign, the Ukrainian government organized a series of events to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the slaughter of thirty-three thousand

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Jews by Nazi occupation troops at a ravine in Kiev called Babi Yar. On September 29th, Yuri Shcherbak and other officials spoke at a service at the site of the massacre, which concluded with the unveiling of a large menorah there. The service represented the government's official acknowledgment that Jews had been the primary targets of the murders. Previous monuments had been unveiled in 1966 and 1976, but they mentioned only Soviet victims of Nazi aggression.

A week later, President Kravchuk spoke at a second memorial ceremony, to which Israel sent its Minister of Education, Zevulun Hammer. "The history of relations between the Ukrainian and the Jewish peoples is complex and dramatic," Kravchuk said. "It had its light and its dark pages. . . . Before the whole world, we declare the unacceptability today of the ideological considerations of the former regime in Ukraine"—again he passed over his own role in that regime—"which disregarded human rights and the rights of nations, which hid the historic truth about the tragedy of Babi Yar from the people: that the majority of the victims of the mass shootings were Jews. This was genocide, and the guilt lies not only with the Fascists but with those who didn't stop the murderers. Part of it we take on ourselves."

Kravchuk, while acknowledging that many Ukrainians had watched passively as the Nazis slaughtered their country's Jews, sidestepped the question of how many Ukrainians had actively collaborated. Still, given the studied disregard during the Soviet period, his statement suggested at least a new sensitivity to the opinion of the rest of the world, and perhaps the beginning of a genuinely new attitude.

To learn more about current Ukrainian-Jewish relations, I telephoned the Rabbi of Kiev, Yaakov Bleich. Speaking in Russian, I identified myself and started to ask for an appointment.

"Look," the rabbi said in a distinct Brooklyn accent. "I probably speak better English than you speak Russian, so why bust each other's chops?" I switched to English, and he invited me to visit.

Following Rabbi Bleich's directions, I walked downhill from the bluff overlooking the Dnieper where Kiev's hotels and government buildings are concentrated and into a neighborhood called Podol. In pre-revolutionary times, Podol (from the Ukrainian word for "valley") had been Kiev's Jewish quarter. The Jews who lived here had long since been dispersed, and there were only a few remnants of the life that had once existed: two- and three-story tenement buildings packed close together; a plaza called Contract Square, where Jewish merchants once gathered to sign business deals; and the city's single active synagogue, hidden away behind gates on which a small sign read "Kiev Jewish Religious Congregation." Kiev once had several synagogues. The Bolsheviks had destroyed or appropriated most of them, and the Nazis destroyed what were left—all except this one, which they had spared for use as a stable.

The synagogue looked old and worn but was carefully painted and repaired. In the sanctuary, young men wearing prayer shawls and with tefillin on their foreheads rocked back and forth, reciting their prayers. I found Rabbi Bleich upstairs, in his office—a room with sloping linoleum floors and Soviet-style laminated-plastic wainscoting on the walls. He wore the dark clothing of an Orthodox rabbi: a black yarmulke, a long black tailcoat and vest with a prayer shawl underneath, and black shoes and trousers. Yet, despite the severe clothes, eyeglasses, and a full beard and mustache, he looked a little like a high-school boy dressing up as a rabbi. He was, it turned out, twenty-seven years old.

"I was born in Williamsburg," he told me. "And I grew up in Borough Park until I was fourteen. I went to a yeshiva in Chicago for four years and continued studying in a rabbinical seminary there, then transferred to Cleveland. I went to Israel for two years, then came back to the States, continued my studies there, got married, had a baby, and came here."

"How did that happen?" I asked.

"What? Having a baby or coming here?"

"Coming to Kiev," I said.

"My great-grandparents on my father's side emigrated from Ukraine in the beginning of the twentieth century," he said. "On my mother's side they were from either Lithuania, Hungary, or Poland. So we've got Eastern European blood running through our bodies. Our congregation in the United States and Israel was founded by people from Byelarus, and it has had ties to the Kiev congregation for twenty years. When the rabbi who was here before me decided to emigrate to Israel, they needed a rabbi. So they called our congregation, and, since I had been active working with Soviet émigrés in the States, our rabbi asked me if I would be interested in coming. I accepted on a three-month trial basis, and two years later I'm still here."

Soviet officials in the pre-*glasnost* days, of course, would hardly have permitted an American rabbi to become the leader of a Ukrainian congregation. Even more remarkable than Rabbi Bleich's presence, though, was the work he had been able to do in Kiev. The rabbi put on his black homburg and a black overcoat. We got into his car and drove across the Dnieper into one of those bleak post-war Soviet neighborhoods of identical high-rise buildings, clanking streetcars, and barren expanses of muddy common land. We stopped at a two-story cement-block building with a sign that identified it as Public School 299. Inside, the building smelled of paint and sawdust, because renovation work was going on. We picked our way into a classroom decorated with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet and with pictures of Biblical scenes. A young woman in a long-sleeved sweater and a long skirt, who introduced herself as Chana Leah Mandel, of Toronto, was teaching a class of ten-year-old girls.

"So why did Jacob run away from Esau?" she asked the class in English. In the back of the room, a scrawny red-haired girl translated the question into Ukrainian. A girl near the front tried to answer in broken Hebrew. Others added their thoughts in Russian and Ukrainian—languages that their teacher did not speak. The class seemed cacophonous but determined. "This class is called Jewish tradition," Rabbi Bleich told me. "We're still not allowed to have religion classes, but we can have that."

In another room, a woman from

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Israel was teaching Hebrew to a group of slightly older girls. They would switch to standard public-school subjects later in the day, the rabbi explained. He had in the past year been able to set up two schools for Jewish children—one for boys and one for girls—within the Kiev public-school system, and he had received permission to recruit about twenty teachers of Hebrew and Jewish tradition from North America and Israel to supplement the regular faculty. The Ukrainian government provided the building, paid the salaries of teachers of secular subjects (Rabbi Bleich paid the religion teachers with money he received from Jewish donors abroad), and was in the process of adding facilities like science labs. The two schools had a total of about five hundred students and a waiting list of a hundred and fifty.

Rabbi Bleich had also managed to recruit a man who slaughtered chickens according to Jewish law, and he was hoping to recruit another for beef, although he estimated that only a few hundred of Kiev's hundred and twenty thousand Jews kept kosher homes. He had set up evening classes in Hebrew and in Jewish tradition which reached two thousand adults. He hoped soon to establish a meal-delivery program for the elderly.

I asked Rabbi Bleich whether he had encountered anti-Semitism in Ukraine.

"Where does everybody get this stuff? That's what I want to know," he replied, sounding exasperated.

From Ukrainian history, I suggested. Since the Mongol invasion, pogroms against Jews had accompanied each brief period of Ukrainian independence. In 1648, Ukrainians vented their hatred of their Polish landlords by slaughtering the Jews whom the Poles employed as overseers. In 1918 and 1919, they killed and raped thousands of Jews for allegedly being agents of the Bolshevik conspiracy.

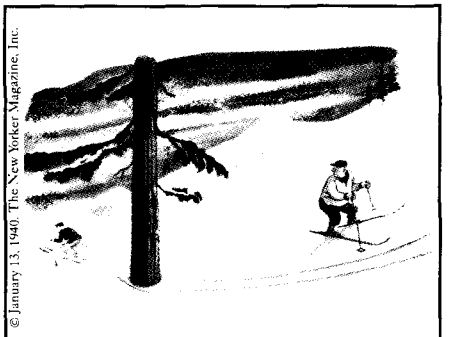
"The history of Ukraine definitely has a lot of anti-Semitism," he said. "We know it. We're not denying it. They know it. They're not denying it anymore. They're willing to face up to their history. The Babi Yar ceremony was probably the greatest thing that has ever happened in the relations of the Ukrainian government and the Jews in the past two hundred years. Because when they were denying that anything had happened, when they were trying to bury it, there was maybe a danger that it would happen again."

I asked why the Babi Yar commemoration had been organized.

"First of all, there may have been a few people here who really meant it seriously, who wanted to say, 'Listen, we did something wrong, and if we want a democracy, if we really want to be honest with ourselves, let's face up to our past,' " he replied. "On the other hand, it was a way of gaining acceptance in the world, by showing you're willing to face up to your past. And even non-Jews reacted. The government got flak, I can tell you, from Ukrainian communities in the outside world who were not interested in this. But they did it."

When I pressed him, the rabbi said he had heard of instances of vandalism in Jewish graveyards. He also knew of cases where Jewish children had been taunted in school. But he had heard of such things in the United States as well, he noted. "In the present situation, I would say that things have come a long way in Ukraine and that right now there is no official anti-Semitism," he said "Let me tell you a funny story, O.K.? Last year, we had some people from the Zionist youth movement in Kiev who made a big sign that said 'Jews, Go Home to Israel.' And they stood with it outside Babi Yar. A week later, a woman calls me up and says, 'Rabbi, did you see what happened? At Babi Yar! Can you imagine the gall of these people? They come and tell us to get the hell out of here and go to Israel! See? Anti-Semitism is happening!' she says. I said, 'Lady, it was Jews who had that sign.' "

COMPLAINTS about persecution in Ukraine tend to come these days not from Jews but, ironically, from Russians. Russians make up more than a fifth of Ukraine's population, and in some border areas they are the majority. During the period of Soviet disintegration, Russian nationalism has emerged more slowly than the nationalism of the Balts, the Caucasians, or even the Ukrainians. During the Soviet period, Russians tended to identify themselves with the union they had created. When *glasnost* loosened up the system, a yearning for national self-determination quickly came to domi-



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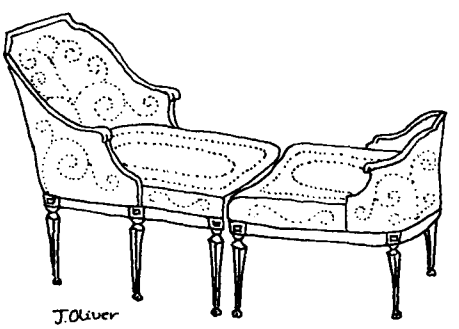
nate politics among the minority populations. The Russians, on the other hand, divided over issues like Communism and democratization. But with Communism gone, and with national identity defining politics in most of the former republics, Russian nationalism is a growing political factor. In November, when I heard that a Russian politician was staging a hunger strike to support an independence referendum in Crimea, I caught a plane to Simferopol, the Crimean capital.

Nearly all the sins of caprice, cruelty, and genocide committed by the Russian and Soviet empires have been visited upon Crimea—a beautiful, craggy peninsula that juts into the Black Sea from the Ukrainian mainland. For a century, the Russian Empire strove to wrest it from the Ottoman Turks and their vassals, the Crimean Tatars—a Turkic people related to the nomadic warriors from the east whose invasion of Europe in the thirteenth century destroyed the first Slavic state. Finally, in 1783, Catherine the Great succeeded. Over the next century and a half, Russians supplanted the Tatars as the majority population, and turned Crimea into a naval base and a resort area. In 1944, Stalin's government, claiming that the Crimean Tatars had coöperated with the Germans who briefly occupied the peninsula, deported virtually the entire remaining Tatar population, amounting to perhaps two hundred thousand, to the arid steppes of Central Asia. In 1954, Nikita Khrushchev transferred Crimea from Russia to Ukraine.

Although Ukrainians in 1991 probably made up no more than a quarter of the peninsula's population of two and a half million, the government in Kiev stressed that it had no intention of giving up Crimea. That stand, not surprisingly, discomfited some of Crimea's Russians. Every time a Ukrainian official in Kiev spoke of, say, the independent government's plans to make Ukrainian the sole language of instruction in Ukrainian higher education (Russian is now used on an equal basis), they fretted about whether their children would be able to go to the university in Simferopol. The leader of the Crimean legislature, a Russian named Nikolai Bagrov, was an old Party apparatchik. He went along with Kravchuk's support for independence. The leader of what had been until August the anti-Communist minority in the legislature, a Russian lawyer named Yuri Meshkov, thereupon set up a tent in the plaza next to the legislative building and held a fast until the legislature passed a law authorizing a separate Crimean referendum on independence.

Meshkov met me at a private club in Simferopol, owned by some of the city's new entrepreneurs. The club served as a base for his political group, called the Republican Movement of Crimea, and for an allied group of Russian veterans of the Afghan War. The movement's own, tilted version of Russia's white-blue-and-red tricolor hung on the wall. Meshkov turned out to be a somewhat quixotic man. When he heard about the August coup, he told me, he and three colleagues hopped in a car and drove to Foros, on the Crimean coast, where Mikhail Gorbachev was under house arrest. They got as far as the gate to the Gorbachev dacha and then were stopped by K.G.B. guards in police uniforms. Meshkov handed the guards an "ultimatum"—with no authority behind it save that of the minority in the Crimean legislature—demanding Gorbachev's release. The guards immediately arrested them, but they were released shortly afterward. Meshkov laughed at the memory of his own boldness.

He was not against independence for Ukraine, he told me. He just didn't want Crimea to go with it. "We want to see Crimea as a state, like an American state, in a union with Russia," he said. Meshkov and the Afghan veterans working with him had plans for launching a petition drive to collect the signatures needed to put the question of Crimean separatism to a vote in a referendum, which would, of course, conflict with the December 1st vote on Ukrainian independence. He expected that they would have the necessary signatures by January, provided he was not jailed first. In October, the Ukrainian government had amended its criminal code to forbid calling publicly for a change in the borders of Ukraine. An official from the prosecutor's office, Meshkov said, had already warned him that his activities might violate that new statute. "It's a totalitarian law," Meshkov complained to me. "And there are already representatives from Rukh at our meetings who record everything we say and send it on."



Not very long ago, an anti-Communist like Meshkov might have been allied with Rukh members in a democratic bloc, but in the new political environment people tended to split along national lines. And in Crimea a new element was being added to the mixture—the Crimean Tatars. Ever since 1987, they have been returning to Crimea from their Central Asian exile, and have frequently squatted on land controlled by Russian collective farms. By the end of 1991, their leader, Mustafa Jemilev, estimated that a hundred and sixty thousand Tatars had returned, and more were coming. The Tatars insisted that they, not the Russians, had the right to say what Crimea's affiliation would be. The Tatars looked to the Ukrainians for help against the Russians.

The Ukrainians, for their part, seemed to fall almost instinctively into the attitude toward Crimea that the Russians in Moscow had for centuries taken toward them. When I asked Ukrainian politicians in Kiev how they felt about Crimean separatism, some of them said that they supported self-determination but that they felt the Crimean Tatars deserved it before the Russians. Others said that, regardless of what the Russians in Crimea might want, the peninsula was irrevocably integrated with the Ukrainian economy and could never become self-sufficient—the same thing that Soviet politicians used to say about republics like Ukraine. Even Levko Lukyanenko, the Presidential candidate who had spent twenty-seven years in Soviet jails for advocating Ukrainian secession, said he saw nothing unjust about a law that threatened to jail people for advocating Crimean secession.

Speaking with Meshkov and other Crimeans, I saw how easily Crimea might become a point of conflict between Russia and Ukraine, in the way that Serbian-populated areas of Croatia became battlefields as Yugoslavia disintegrated. At the moment, although

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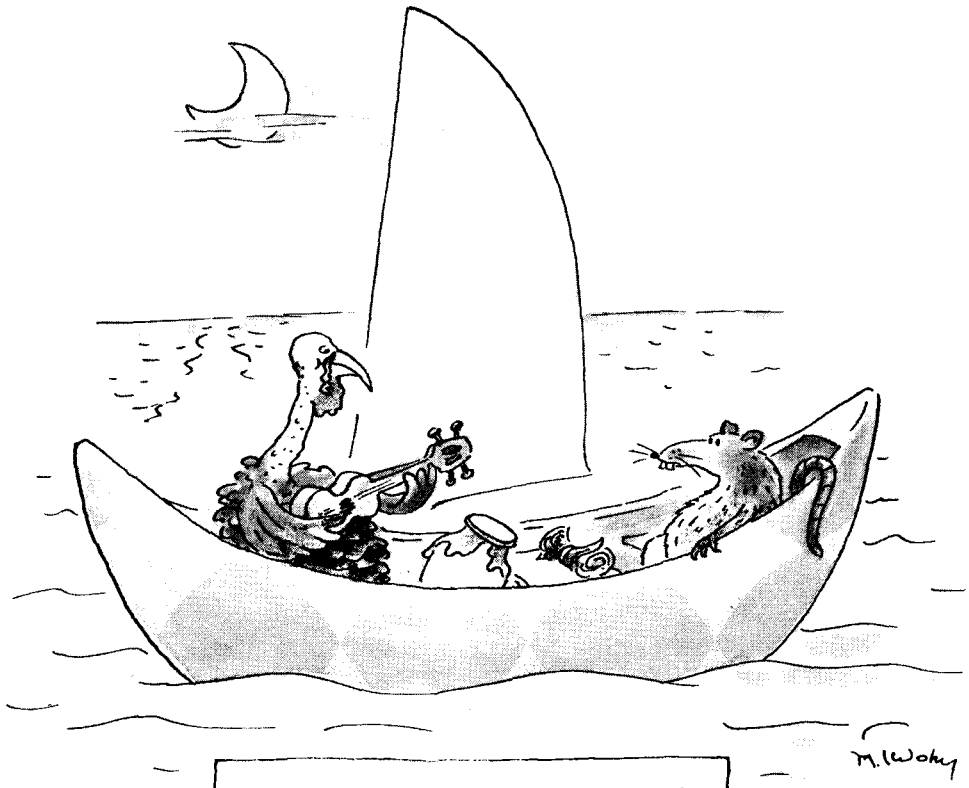
Yeltsin and his government have renounced any claims to Ukrainian territory, individual Russian officials say they will be watching closely to see how Ukraine treats the Russian population in Crimea; then, too, Yeltsin's government might be replaced, or might itself take a more aggressive, nationalist posture. In such circumstances, the jailing of a leader like Yuri Meshkov could be highly inflammatory. Everyone in Crimea is aware of what is happening in Yugoslavia and is determined to avoid anything similar. But no one has much experience in finding peaceful compromise solutions to emotional conflicts. "I don't care whether we live in Ukraine or Russia, or wherever," a worried Russian told me one night in Simferopol as a streetcar carried us away from a political meeting. "People just want to live well. But no one knows how to do that."



UNDERSTUDIES

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Election Day was cold, damp, and cloudy, much as the two preceding weeks had been. I took an electric train for an hour out of Kiev and got off in a village called Glevakha to watch the voting. The station was a mile or so from the center of the village, and the walk into town took me past fields of plowed black earth, gleaming dully in clumps the size of wheelbarrows. Like thousands of other Soviet cities and towns, Glevakha had a main drag named after Lenin. In Glevakha, though, Lenin Street was barely wide enough to let two cars pass one another. That didn't seem to pose a problem, since it appeared that few villagers owned cars. Fat chickens, roosters, and geese scrounged for tidbits on the shoulders of the road, on either side of which stood cottages with fenced yards. More prosperous villagers might have a garage, or a second story added to their house in brick of a slightly different color. All the cottages had gardens in their back yards. And, like thousands of other Soviet cities and towns, Glevakha boasted a House of Culture. But this one was a plain one-story building of whitewashed concrete with a sagging sign out front that said "Cinema," and it was the polling station.

The House of Culture consisted of one room, with rough board floors, a stage at one end, and lighting sconces that all seemed to be missing something—a bulb here, a shade there. A scratchy radio played syrupy folk music. Some chairs near the stage had been removed to make room for four curtained voting booths. Hefty women in kerchiefs and rubber boots and men with lined, weather-beaten faces were walking in, getting their ballots from a registration table, and entering the booths. After a moment or two, each would emerge, stuff his or her ballot in an urn, and walk out, nodding to the neighbors. Occasionally, a small, satisfied smile would flicker across someone's lips.

I sat down next to a couple of old men who were observing the voting between rounds of a voluble political debate. Soon one of them got up and left, and the other, an erect, vigorous man with yellowing gray hair and a mustache, introduced himself. "I'm Yevgeny Kirilovich Martynenko," he said. "I was born in 1920, and I made it through six prisons and ten concentration camps." Martynenko went on to tell me of his life as a survivor. He survived the famine of the early thirties, he said, because his father used to walk forty-odd miles to Kiev, take a train to a Byelarussian village where relatives lived, get some food, and bring it back in a pack on his shoulders. He survived the Second World War because when it started he was heard telling his fellow-soldiers that he didn't think Soviet power was worth defending. For that he got ten years in Siberia, and he survived them by being strong and stubborn. He survived after the war by lying about his past so that he could get work as a physical-education teacher.

Without much prodding, Martynenko agreed to show me the rest of the village. Most of the people in the area still worked on collective farms, he said; although there was legislation to break up the farms and give the land to private owners, nothing had been done about it. "The reason is that the *nomenklatura*, the directors of the farms, would have no work to do and would have to earn a living on their own if the farms were broken up," he explained.

Glevakha had a grocery store. Inside, forty or fifty people had gathered to take advantage of the specialty of the day, fresh eggs. There were some canned fruits and preserves on the shelves, and some loaves of bread in carts, and there was a section of food reserved for the elderly. The villagers

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appeared to be eating better than the people of Kiev, to say nothing of the people of Moscow.

The village church had once occupied the site of the grocery store but had been torn down. Now, Martynenko told me, the congregation had a makeshift church in a whitewashed cottage with a small golden cross on the peak of its roof, around the corner on Young Communist League Street. It was Sunday, and a service was in progress as we went inside. At the front of the room, a bearded priest dressed in satiny white vestments heard confessions. People dropped a coin in a box as he gave them absolution. In one corner, a choir of four or five people, led by an old woman with a clear, sweet soprano, sang hymns. Then the congregation, which consisted mostly of elderly women dressed in black, lined up for the Eucharist. The priest dispensed it in the Orthodox method, putting bread on a spoon, dipping it into the wine, and feeding it to the communicant. As we watched, a blond middle-aged woman, weeping quietly, moved among the people, handing out cookies and pieces of candy. She did so, Martynenko said, to mark the first anniversary of the death of her sixteen-year-old son, and to thank the congregation for sharing her grief.

"Why did the boy die so young?" I asked.

"Brain cancer," Martynenko said. "Chernobyl." It struck me that all across Ukraine, whenever anyone died young, people were explaining the death to themselves with that one word.

Outdoors again, I asked Martynenko whether the people in Glevakha would vote for Kravchuk.

He said they would, even though he himself supported Lukyanenko. "The Communists still have influence in the institutes, on the farms, and in the enterprises," he explained. "They control the situation. They tell people that if they vote for Kravchuk there will be some food in the stores. They promise things. They don't threaten anymore. It's done delicately. The old structure still works. They say they're for independence. They claim that they've changed. It's all been since the coup in August. They've changed their clothes and put on new ones, but the body and soul remain, and haven't changed."

I asked whether the people in Glevakha had voted to preserve the union in Gorbachev's referendum in March.

Martynenko said they had. "The question was a little vague, and people couldn't figure out the ballot," he explained. "And there was inertia. But now they know, and they will vote for independence."

I asked whether he thought Ukraine would be better off independent.

"Without a doubt," he said, nodding vigorously. "Within two or three years, we'll lift ourselves up by our bootstraps. We just need to get out from under dictatorship. Our people love their land, and they love to work." He hesitated, remembering, perhaps, that we had just come from a church that commended honesty to its faithful, and then said, "Well, drinking. Like everywhere. And the lottery. Well, the lottery, you won't find a society without it." He gave a small sigh of resignation. Then he plunged ahead. "But, basically, we're all eager for an independent Ukraine. We want to liberate it! For three hundred years, the Russians have taken ninety-five per cent of everything produced here. We had nineteen million Communists"—a slight exaggeration of the total Party membership in the former Soviet Union—"who did nothing. They just took everything. And we have nothing. We earned a lot, but they gave us very little."

It seemed to me a brusque eulogy for an empire, and an overoptimistic view of what might take its place. And, strictly from the standpoint of statistics, Martynenko was probably wrong. The Russians have figures suggesting that, for instance, the oil they shipped cheaply to the republics was worth more than the cotton and the sausages they got in return. But after talking about the past with many Ukrainians in the weeks preceding the voting I decided that one conclusion was unavoidable: the Russians—or, more precisely, the Russian leaders of the past seventy-

four years—had brought this opprobrium on themselves.

A DAY later, an election official, standing under a white bas-relief of Lenin in a Kiev auditorium, announced the anticipated results. More than eighty per cent of the voters had approved Ukrainian independence. (In Crimea, the figure was only fifty-four per cent, he said. Since it could be assumed that the Ukrainians and the Tatars voted heavily for independence, the figure suggested that the majority of the Russians in Crimea voted against it.) Leonid Kravchuk had received about fifty-six per cent of the votes and would become President without a runoff.

These results, combined with Kravchuk's stated determination not to sign a union treaty, put an end to Gorbachev's wan final efforts to preserve the Soviet Union. During November, Yeltsin had participated in a series of meetings, organized by Gorbachev, that had reached a vague, tentative agreement on what a new union might look like. But after the Ukrainian vote Yeltsin stated publicly that he could not sign a union treaty that did not include Ukraine. On December 8th, he, Kravchuk, and the Byelarussian leader Stanislav Shushkevich, meeting in a hunting lodge near Brest, quickly reached agreement to form a Commonwealth of Independent States, which would try to get along without a central government. It was not necessarily what Yeltsin had wanted, and it was certainly not what Gorbachev had wanted, but it was all that Ukraine would agree to—and Ukraine, for the first time in several centuries, was in a position to impose its views on Russia. By the end of the month, all the former Soviet republics except Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Georgia had agreed to join the commonwealth. Although the agreement left a lot of unanswered questions, such as the disposition of the Soviet Navy's Black Sea fleet, the republics entered into it voluntarily, rather than submitting to a plan from the center, and that fact gave it, I thought, at least a chance of survival. On Christmas Day, Mikhail Gorbachev resigned the Presidency of a Soviet Union that, except for his presence in the Kremlin, had effectively ceased to exist.

The day after the voting, I dropped in on Yuri Shcherbak. He told me that

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on Election Day he and his daughter had gone to his old medical school to vote. They had both decided, after watching televised debates between the candidates, to vote for Lukyanenko, the former prisoner, even though they knew that Kravchuk would win. "Lukyanenko is very naïve, he doesn't understand the economy, but he was in jail for twenty-seven years. At least, he's an honest, decent, and consistent man," Shcherbak said. They both, of course, had voted for independence. After voting, he went to a reception given by a Ukrainian businessman and offered a toast or two to the new nation. Then he went home, early. So did most Ukrainians. Walking about Kiev in the days after the referendum, I saw no hint of a celebration, no sign that people felt joyful about independence. They plodded along the sidewalks, glancing only to one side—into the empty store windows.

Shcherbak had few illusions. He flipped me a copy of the morning newspaper, which used to be called *Soviet Ukraine* and had recently been renamed *Democratic Ukraine*. At the top of the front page was a drawing that looked at first like a reprinted Soviet propaganda poster from the pre-*glasnost* days. Two clear-eyed, firm-jawed youths, looking confidently out into the distance, flanked a wise, kindly old man who was showing them the way. In an earlier time, the sage might have been Lenin or Stalin, pointing the way to Communism. On this day, it was Taras Shevchenko, Ukraine's national poet. The drawing suggested how much and how little had changed. Communism was dead, but in its place was a romantic nationalism, which—just as Communism had been supposed to do—was going to lead Ukraine to its glittering future.

"It just shows how far we have to go in our thinking," Shcherbak said of the drawing and the kind of journalists who produced it. The referendum, he added, was a turning point. "Only now, for the first time in all Ukrainian history, could people calmly and freely take a ballot and cast it," he said. "And that has enormous significance."

I asked him why there had been no celebration in Kiev.

"People are beaten down by their economic struggles and their daily cares," he replied. "How can you talk about rejoicing?" —ROBERT CULLEN

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THE THEATRE

The Despicable Race

ON the night of May 10, 1849, the celebrated British actor William Charles Macready, on the last leg of an American tour, was slated to play "Macbeth" at the Astor Place Opera House, in New York City. During his performance, a production of the same play at a nearby theatre, starring the celebrated American actor Edwin Forrest, led to a riot in which dozens of people were killed or wounded. According to Mary C. Henderson, who describes the riot briefly in her book "The City and the Theatre," the incident was the result of "a confrontation between the Anglophilic aristocrats and the Anglophobic Bowery gangs." But "The Oxford Companion to the Theatre," which says that Macready had become "Forrest's implacable rival," cites "their mutual animosity" as the cause, while Bryan Forbes, in his book "That Despicable Race: A History of the British Acting Tradition," refers to "mobs organised in support of Edwin Forrest," who evidently "felt that Macready had been responsible" for his poor reception in England. Apparently, Macready, who hadn't wanted to be an actor anyway (he was driven into the profession by financial need), never quite recovered from the incident. The Opera House never recovered, either. In Henderson's book, a caption below an engraving of the building states that the riot "forever tarnished its reputation," and that the theatre was eventually "sold at auction to the Mercantile Library Association and renamed Clinton Hall after extensive remodelling."

Richard Nelson's play "Two Shakespearean Actors," which takes the Astor Place riot as its subject, doesn't choose any one circumstance as the cause of the incident; it alludes to all of them—nationalism, class resentment, anti-British feeling, personal and professional enmity. But what's surprising is that out of such potentially sociopolitical material Nelson has fashioned a play that is more about character than about anything else. "Two Shakespearean Actors" takes as its *real* subject narcissism—and in particular the peculiar forces driving the actor on in his quest for whatever it is he seeks. Nelson's Macready, who embodies the Victorian actor-manager tradition, is the supreme egotist; Nelson's Forrest looks forward to the infantile boy-man of the contemporary show-business world. Ultimately, though, "Two Shakespearean Actors" is as much about communion as it is about ego and rivalry.

That the play, which opened last week at the Cort, is such a treat is due partly to the subject matter, partly to elegant writing and ensemble acting, and partly to the performances of Brian Bedford and Victor Garber as Macready and Forrest. I can't remember when I last saw a play in which the stars lived up to their reputations (and even exceeded one's hopes), or a play that justified so costly a production and so large a cast. In addition to Jane Greenwood's period costumes and David Jenkins' versatile beam-and-doorframe set, which finds ingenious ways to juxtapose real and backstage life, "Two Shakespearean Actors" has a twenty-eight-member company, in which the only casualties are Eric Stoltz, who gives an incompetent performance as the playwright Boucicault, and Željko Ivanek, who is truly insufferable as the turncoat actor John Ryder. It's a mark of the play's strength that Jack O'Brien's production can survive, and even transcend, two such performances, but it does. And the presence of so many familiar New York actors in the ensemble—Tom Aldredge, Frances Conroy, Judy Kuhn, Bill Moor, James Murtaugh, Graham Winton, and Jennifer Van Dyck—makes one feel almost as though New York had a repertory company like the Royal Shakespeare Company, in London, where the play began.

In Nelson's new play, the foibles of actors are as well and as lovingly observed as were the duplicity and self-aggrandizing of the academics in his last, "Some Americans Abroad"; but here the satire is more broadly based and the payoff more uplifting. Where "Some Americans" counted on the pleasure we derived from watching exquisite acting to offset the grim truths it conveyed, "Two Shakespeareans" redeems its fundamentally unlikable heroes.

Or, rather, it sets lovableness against unlikability. We find ourselves honoring actors—loving them (if possible) even more than they love themselves—not least because the play has shown real actors off to their best advantage. It's generous on their behalf, giving them lots to work with. For all the skill and cleverness in the writing, the lines require performance. They need a master of irony like Bedford, or a complex picture of bastardliness, such as the one Garber gives us, to mine the layers of meaning. Throughout the play, for instance, characters are forever making vague but pointed state-

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ments about the breed of actors. "We're actors," someone will say, or "I'm an actor!"—as though that somehow explained everything. The meaning is entirely dependent on the delivery. Then, late in the play, Garber caps an anecdote by exclaiming "Actors!," and makes the word mean a dozen things.

In its celebration of actors, Nelson's play is reminiscent of the Mr. and Mrs. Crummles portions of "Nicholas Nickleby." That we should have to resort to the Victorian period in order to properly rejoice in the figure of the actor is a curious phenomenon. It may have something to do with the way we view Victorian melodrama. To get sentimental about serious theatre feels wrong—unseemly or self-indulgent. But for us a certain brand of bad theatre—like the glimpses we get of Forrest's signature "noble savage" play, "Metamora," and the contrapuntal scenes from "Macbeth" we see being rehearsed (whether in Forrest's new-fangled down-and-dirty or Macready's fustian)—has come to mean not so much failure as a genial, expansive, and tragically naïve form of aspiration.

Nelson himself seems to understand the lure of melodrama, but he keeps the momentous events in Macready's and Forrest's lives offstage. You get the full effect of his gift for setting side by side the seen and the unseen, the ostensibly trivial and the ostensibly dire in the brilliant closing sequence, in which the two actors finally confront each other in the safety of Forrest's theatre. It's one of the cleverest liberties Nelson takes with history—having Macready seek shelter in Forrest's dressing room. (In real life, he took refuge with a friend.) While all around them is mayhem and confusion, the two actors chat, engage in a little textual analysis, and then adjourn to the stage, where each tests the acoustics of the theatre by acting a little Shakespeare. It's a tour de force for both playwright and actors. You have to have written a pretty good play for it not to look shabby when the characters start spouting Shakespeare. By the same token, your actors have to be pretty good to carry it off. It's one of the nicest things about "Two Shakespearean Actors" that when Garber starts delivering some famous lines from the end of "Othello" it's hard to choose between watching Garber and watching Bedford watch him.

—Mimi Kramer

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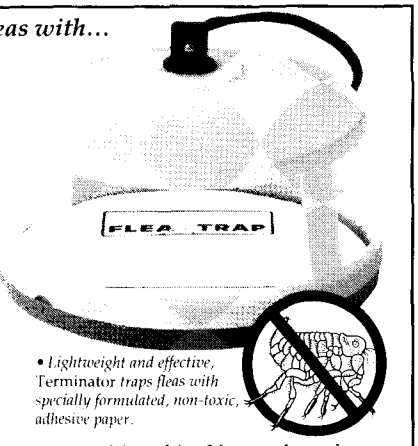

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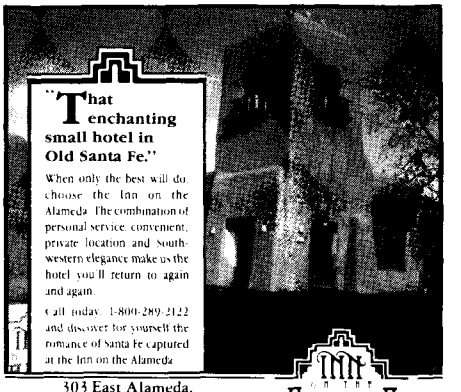

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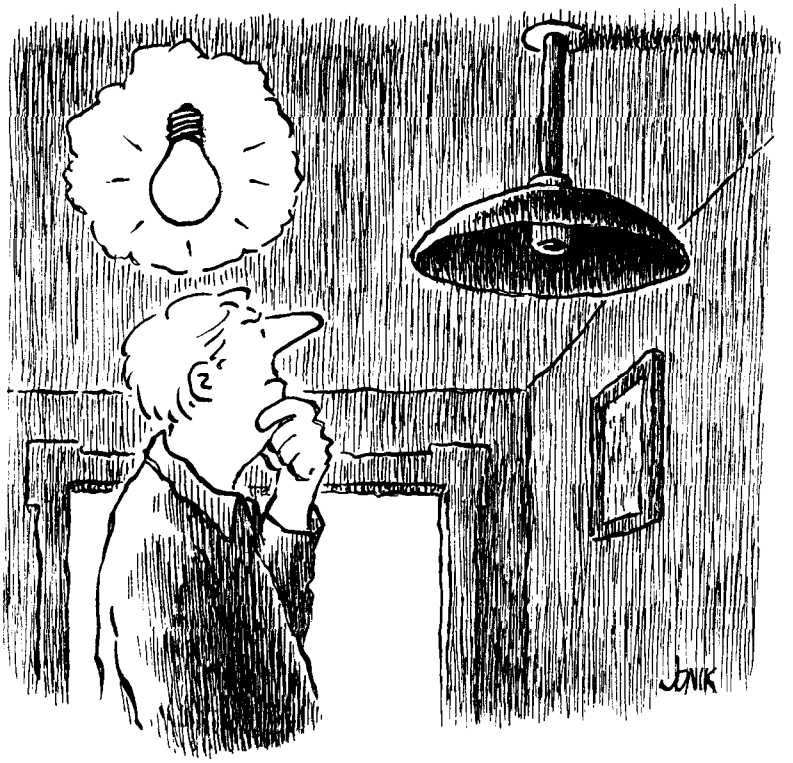
Barbra Streisand's "The Prince of Tides," adapted from Pat Conroy's 1986 novel of that name, is a big, earnest psychoanalytic soap opera. The book takes six hundred and sixty-four pages of smallish print (in the paperback edition) to tell the story of a screwed-up South Carolina family. Conroy's fulsome pseudoliterary prose inflates everything—the most trivial perceptions, the most unremarkable emotions—to epic size, but his strenuous huffing and puffing can't disguise the banality of his ideas: "The Prince of Tides" is a novel in which people come to terms with their past, make peace with the demons that have haunted them since childhood, learn how to let go of the "dysfunctional" emotional patterns inflicted on them by their parents, and become sensitive, caring human beings. Traumas are dredged up; harsh truths are faced; crippling neuroses are conquered; lives are changed. Conroy's insistent mythicizing of magazine-article psychology gives the story a peculiar quality of unreality; the florid soul-searching of the narrator, an unemployed high-school English teacher and football coach named Tom Wingo, makes ordinary scenes of domestic strife seem fantastic, hysterically overimagined. This family saga should have been called "One Hundred Years of Solipsism."

Compressing Conroy's bloated opus to feature-film dimensions automatically improves it. Streisand handles the material affectionately, even reverently, but the demands of movie storytelling force her to get to the point a lot quicker than the novel does. Her direction is smooth and canny: she sets up the fundamental dramatic conflicts clearly and economically, and she keeps the narrative moving along at a satisfying pace. "The Prince of Tides" plays better on the screen than it does on the page partly because Streisand is such a skillful director and partly because in this context the triteness of the content doesn't feel quite so jarringly disproportionate to the style. Streisand distills Conroy's story to its corn-based essence: the film's strong Hollywood brew of pop uplift, soft-focus romance, and middle-class melodrama seems the ideal form for "The Prince of Tides."

The fumes of Conroy's terrible ideas linger in the air, though, along with pungent whiffs of his prose. (Conroy wrote the screenplay, in collaboration with Becky Johnston, and we're treated periodically to brief passages of voice-over narration taken directly from the book.) The movie retains both the structure and the underlying philosophy of its source. The story incorporates frequent flashbacks to Tom Wingo's childhood and is designed to build to a Freudian analytic breakthrough—the moment when he reveals the deep, dark secret that has prevented him from reaching full emotional maturity. After a lyrical prologue in which the narrator breezes through some benign childhood memories, the story proper begins, and we see the adult Tom (Nick Nolte) at home, on the South Carolina coast, with his edgy-looking wife, Sallie (Blythe Danner), and their three young daughters. He's a middle-aged ex-jock who seems to respond to everything with jaunty, self-conscious wisecracks. We're meant to sense the desperation underneath his forced heartiness, and the movie doesn't take long to bring his unease to the surface. His mother, Lila (Kate Nelligan), whom he obviously detests, gives him the news that his twin sister, Savannah (Melinda Dillon), is in the psychiatric ward of a New York City hospital recovering from a serious suicide attempt; Tom makes plans to go to New York and consult with Savannah's shrink, and before he leaves, Sallie tells him how unhappy she is with their marriage. In this flurry of plotting, the movie contrives to bring its hero face to face with all the unresolved emotions that he has been repressing—the anxieties, the long-nursed resentments, the persistent sense of failure. When Tom gets to New York, he moves into Savannah's Village apartment and goes to see her psychiatrist, Dr. Lowenstein (Streisand); the doctor persuades him to tell her the Wingo family history, with the idea that he might lead her to the source of Savannah's misery.

The narrative is organized around Tom's reminiscences, which he doles out in daily sessions with Dr. Lowenstein. At her instigation, he recounts, reluctantly at first, the horrors of his upbringing: the abuses heaped on the Wingo kids by their bullying, macho father, Henry (Brad Sullivan); the face-saving dishonesty imposed on them by their vain and rather crafty mother. As the flashbacks pile up, we're given to understand that this oral-history project, undertaken on behalf of Savannah, is doing Tom a terrific amount of good. He's becoming more confident, more open, less guarded. He quits smoking, starts jogging daily, and tutors the doctor's moody teen-age son (Jason Gould) in the



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art of football. By the final forty minutes or so of the picture—after Tom has, at last, opened his psychic bomb bays all the way and dropped the Big One—he's a new man: man enough to take Lowenstein to his bed, giving her everything she hasn't been getting from her slimeball concert-violinist husband (Jeroen Krabbé), and then man enough to renounce her. The movie ends in a blaze of healing, wholeness, and mid-life acceptance of self; the sun sets, the credits roll, the music (by James Newton Howard) swells like an abscess. The emotional wealth that Tom Wingo acquires in the course of "The Prince of Tides" does not, however, trickle down to enrich the audience. Tom's memories strike him with the force of huge cathartic revelations, but they're not nearly distinctive enough to move us in the same way. The childhood scenes quickly lose their power to surprise us, because they're just variations on a set of crude archetypes: brutal Dad, manipulative Mom. The static, repetitive quality of these sequences is inevitable, given Conroy's conception of the Wingo parents: Henry is intended to represent some essential principle of masculinity, Lila its feminine counterpart. Their orbits are fixed.

In fact, everything in "The Prince of Tides" has that sort of predictability. Conroy's narrative method consists of establishing characters who embody common stereotypes, setting them in motion around each other, and then watching them follow the courses that he's mapped for them. The inherent, irreparable flaw in both the book and the movie is that Conroy's message of openness and change and emotional liberation is belied by his manner: the overdetermination of the characters and the plot reveals his desire to create something universal, eternal, immutable. If the movie feels a lot less oppressive than the novel, it's largely because the actors sometimes manage to break out of their assigned places in Conroy's grand design—to violate the stereotypes with traces of their own mysteriously particular human qualities. Sullivan's snarling Henry Wingo remains a gross caricature throughout, and Streisand never quite gets the hang of the Lowenstein role (which seems, unfortunately, a repository for the author's highly conflicted feelings about New Yorkers, Jewish intellectuals, and professional women), but

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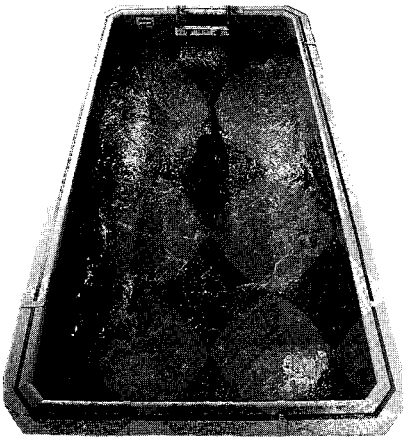

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most of the cast performs heroically. Danner, who has rarely had a movie role large enough for her extraordinary talents, makes the most of her few scenes here. As written, Sallie Wingo is barely more than a plot function, a trigger for her husband's mid-life crisis, but Danner's deceptively simple gestures and readings evoke depths of pain and confusion that the role seems inadequate to contain. The emotional power of her acting is so direct and so suggestive that it stays in your mind even when she's not onscreen; no matter what's going on in New York, we're always aware of Sallie, wondering how she's doing—we can't forget her any more than Tom can. Nelligan brings a comparable quality of spilling-over inventiveness to the difficult role of Lila Wingo. She thoroughly transcends the narrow Southern-belle terms of the part, and thus almost subverts one of the story's crucial premises: that Lila's deviousness and her willingness to cover up unpleasant truths are the sources of Tom's inability to confront his emotions. The way Nelligan plays her, the character seems far too complex to deserve such facile condemnation. When Tom reveals the incident that really sealed his grudge against his mother, we aren't nearly as shocked as we're meant to be. Nelligan has made us understand this difficult woman, and sort of like her; even at her worst, Lila doesn't horrify us.

"The Prince of Tides" is primarily Nick Nolte's show; he bears the weight of all Conroy's and Streisand's ambitions, and, for the most part, he carries his burden with miraculous grace. He's a marvellous actor and a great screen presence, and he's well cast as Tom Wingo. Tom is intended to embody several stereotypes at once: the rugged masculinity of the football coach, the sensitivity of the English teacher, the easy jocularity of the Southern good old boy. Nolte comes close—closer, perhaps, than any other actor could—to making human sense of this grab bag of clichés; for long stretches of the picture, we actually believe in Tom Wingo. Nolte lends a touch of unforced irony to the character's insufferable self-absorption; without his ease and charm, "The Prince of Tides" would be impossible to sit through. But even he can't redeem the movie's showstopper emotional scenes: the fuzzy-headedness and the grandiose bathos of the material defeat him. There's an overwhelming current of self-pity running through the story, and it culminates in what is supposed to be the picture's climactic sequence—Tom's account of his most traumatic memory. By the time he's ready to tell all, both he and we have just about forgotten that the purpose of his recollections is to help his sister. She's the one who tried to kill herself, the one who seems to have suffered most from the sins of the Wingo family, but we're entirely focussed on *his* pain now. He breaks down weeping, in closeup, and then the camera pans to Lowenstein's face, and tears are rolling there, too. The scene is classically unplayable, because the flamboyant anguish of Tom and the sympathetic shrink feels like a false emotional resolution: they seem to be having Savannah's therapeutic breakthrough, and she's nowhere in sight. Whose catharsis is this, anyway? Savannah does surface briefly later in the picture, looking tenuously healthy; while no one was watching, Dr. Lowenstein must have passed along the gist of Tom's liberating revelation to her patient.

The comforting fantasy of "The Prince of Tides" is that being honest with yourself wipes out all your problems in a swift, bold stroke: face yourself, and you're cured. The movie, however, is proof that things aren't so simple, either in art or in life. For all the intelligent craft and sincere effort that have gone into the picture, for all the emotional "truth" that it parades before us, it leaves us unconvinced, uneasy, unchanged. Streisand has done an admirably scrupulous job of adaptation, but the movie never manages to transform its imperfect material. Both as a work of the imagination and as a design for living, Conroy's story remains stubbornly and fundamentally dysfunctional.

—Terrence Rafferty

•

MOST DISAPPOINTING CORRECTION OF THE WEEK

[*From Blockbuster magazine*]

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Dear Editor:
In the May issue of your magazine, the article J. P. Faber wrote called "Bring On the Dragons" refers to John Phillip Law having a line which reads: "There is an old proverb I choose to believe: trust an olive, but tie up your camel." I believe that that line is supposed to be: "Trust in Allah, but tie up your camel."

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AROUND CITY HALL

The Unpeaceable Kingdom

AFTER a natural disaster—a tornado or a flood—in which many people die, those looking back may take comfort in telling each other that nothing could have been done to save the victims, that nobody was to blame, that it was God's—or somebody's—will. In the case of the deaths of nine young people here as a result of being crushed, on December 28th, in the City College gymnasium building, where they had gone to attend a celebrity-rapper basketball game, no such comfort has been available. Close to 9 P.M. on the night of January 15th, Mayor David Dinkins held a press conference at which he released a sixty-seven-page report on the fatal evening prepared for him by Milton Mollen, his deputy mayor for public safety. "It is clear now these were deaths that were unnecessary and avoidable," the Mayor said. The report reached "the inescapable conclusion that almost all of the individuals involved in the event demonstrated a lack of responsibility." Far from there being nobody to blame, there was nearly everybody to blame. The lives of the nine men and women ended because, as they stood among forty or so other rap and basketball fans at the bottom of a twelve-foot staircase, pressed against four metal doors that were closed, and were unopenable from that side, a large crowd of fans lunged down the stairs and upon them with such force that their chests were compressed to the point that they could not breathe; oxygen did not reach their brains, and they died on the spot, or soon afterward. The oldest of the victims was twenty-eight; five were under twenty-one, and three of these were still in their teens. All were either in school or working. The parents of the victims, many of whom still lived at home, are correction officers, nurses, teachers, social workers. When the papers show pictures of young blacks killed in this city—and all the City College victims were black—they are often, sadly, dealers cut down in the local drug wars. Those who, on December 28th, had decided to spend their evening at a basketball game had seemed to be headed for happier futures, but their lives, too, are now over.

The decision to hold a mid-evening press conference to release the report on the tragedy—which could hardly be a bright moment in Dinkins-administration history, in view of the performance by city agencies—was assumed by many reporters to have been made with the knowledge that this would prevent it from being covered on the six-o'clock news shows, the most watched of the day. By the following evening, it would have a diminished effect, as a second-day story. Moreover, the early-evening deadlines of most of the dailies would mean that they wouldn't be able to give it the play it might otherwise receive. But the tabloids gave it prominent space, and it was the lead story in the *Times*. In fact, because the report was released two and half weeks after the event, there wasn't much new information in it. Reporters not only had talked to most of the witnesses quoted but, like Mollen, had listened to police-radio transmissions, including one on the evening of the twenty-eighth: while crowds of young blacks milled about in front of the gymnasium, a policeman could be heard saying, "They're not people, they're animals." New Yorkers who had been keeping up with the news were already used to the names of the rapper-basketball players who had been invited that night, particularly Heavy D and Puff Daddy—the latter having been the chief entrepreneur of the event. The flyers that Puff Daddy had put out advertising the game had included a promise that a portion of the proceeds would go to an AIDS-education outreach program, although no specific measures had been taken to see that this came about. It was no surprise that the report came down hard on the administration of City College, and on the fact that it had allowed the event to be scheduled with almost no supervision, and the students who had arranged for the use of the gymnasium for Puff Daddy had (like C.C.N.Y.) paid minimal attention to the security that should have been provided for the twenty-seven hundred spectators who were expected. In the end, not only was the security inadequate (especially after come-ons on a black-owned radio station caused the crowd to swell by a thousand or so) but there was almost no coördination among the Pinkerton agency representatives, members of the X-Men (a Muslim security group), and the city policemen who were on hand. Despite a City Hall tradition that the police are to be given the benefit of all doubt, the report also came down hard on the cops' "questionable" judgment, particularly that of the duty captain, Daniel P. Car-

"When I married your father, I stopped reading."

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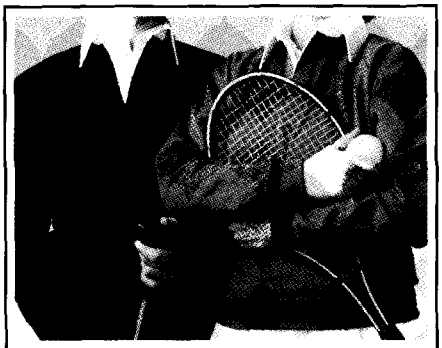
lin, who refused to allow his men to enter the building even after he was informed that the uncontrolled turmoil inside had put people in terrible danger. (At a press conference the next day, Carlin, who, like seventy-five per cent of the force, is white, said, "My conscience is absolutely clear.") And although the city's 911 number got a message at 7:04 that evening saying, "People are dying," in the general confusion no ambulance went out for twenty minutes, by which time many of the victims were dead.

There had been some hope in the early hours after the tragedy that the ugly element of race might be missing from this event, which was already so painful. Not only were all the victims black but so is Bernard Harleston, the president of City College. Most of the students the rappers dealt with are black, as are all the rappers. Police Commissioner Lee Brown is black, and was appointed, of course, by a black mayor. However, the new year had just begun when Puff Daddy held a press conference, in which he speculated that everything would have turned out better if the game had been held at "some more prestigious college—and not one in Harlem," the location of City College. About the same time, Lloyd Williams, the president of the Uptown Chamber of Commerce, told the *Amsterdam News* that the event hadn't been properly planned: "Because it's black and it's rap, it doesn't count. . . . We've got to stop allowing them to continually attempt to destroy our musical forms and culture." At a January 12th service in memory of the nine who died, the Reverend Lawrence Lucas, who is the pastor of the Resurrection Roman Catholic Church, in Harlem (and whose brother William Lucas is a Bush Justice Department appointee), described Dr. Harleston as "a glorified Uncle Tom." The Reverend Timothy Mitchell, of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Queens, called the deaths "a painful reminder of the racist, capitalist, individualist society . . . that has contempt for life." And James Small, who runs a student center at City College, suggested that the police might have orchestrated the unruly behavior, so that "the animals in blue" could "bust black heads." The parents of only one of the young people who died, Yul Dargan, attended the service. They did not stay long, explaining, "We had no way of knowing what would be said and who the speakers would be." Mrs. Dargan added, "If that's the way they want to give a memorial . . . the way I feel doesn't matter."

ON January 16th, the day after Martin Luther King's birthday, the Mayor's schedule included three meetings to discuss what to do about the series of racially motivated crimes that have dominated local headlines in recent weeks. He met with a hundred religious and community leaders, with members of the State Legislature, and with Governor Mario Cuomo, who said that he found it hard to remember a time when there had been a more distressing number of incidents involving this "insidious kind of violence." Dinkins promised to speak out often—to "issue a loud wake-up call"—on the need for racial tolerance. It was a reminder of the many speeches of this sort for which he was hailed during his first year as mayor, and also of the fact that, unfortunately, on that front little has changed in the time since—in contrast to the many great changes on the national and international scene, to which New Yorkers, like other Americans, are just beginning to adjust. The ribbons that were hung on the wrought-iron lampposts in front of City Hall at the start of the forty-two days of the Gulf War were finally taken down the first week in October—gray, tattered shreds whose original color (yellow, of course) was no longer discernible. More recently, Americans have had to adjust to the spectacle of President Bush's approval rating, which was ninety-one per cent after the end of the Gulf War, falling this month to forty-five per cent. These numbers have been a comfort to Dinkins, although they are not likely to fall as low as twenty-six per cent, which is his most recent score. Within an hour or so after the celebrated Tokyo banquet, the Mayor, who relishes the collegial give-and-take among high officeholders, sent the President a letter expressing great happiness at Bush's swift recovery and—as a fellow tennis player—great regret at his loss of a match a few hours before the event. It was Governor Cuomo who, when Bush's ratings were at their all-time high, kept pushing the idea that the President could be beaten by a Democrat (not that he was implying in any way, of course, that that Demo-



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crat would be the governor of New York), pointing out that in the summer of 1990, before Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, Bush's approval score had been in the low forties. He did not quote Winston Churchill, who said nostalgically, after the Second World War and his ouster from government, "War is the greatest of all stimulants." It is because of Cuomo that this city has had to adjust to a degree of decline in its national-attention ratings. During much of last year and particularly in the weeks before his announcement, on December 20th, that because of his responsibilities as governor, and in view of the state's continuing budget crisis, he would not be a candidate for the Democratic Presidential nomination, he was a national—indeed, international—political cynosure, with clamoring reporters, trailed by camera crews, following him everywhere, hanging on each possibly telling comment, both in Albany and in this city. Since December 20th, he has been just one of dozens of governors around the country who are battling recalcitrant legislatures and a falling national economy in an effort to bring some degree of fiscal well-being to their states and to their cities, such as this one. The elevation into an international hero of Mikhail Gorbachev, the head of what Ronald Reagan recently said he had referred to fairly as the evil empire, has led to an elevation of a different kind here. Abe Lebewohl, the owner of the Second Avenue Kosher Deli, at Second Avenue and Tenth Street, who was once such a Reagan admirer that when the President visited this city he presented him with a large likeness of the White House made of chopped liver, is now such an admirer of the former Soviet President that he commissioned an eight-foot-high wooden sculpture of him and had it placed on top of the canopy in front of his deli. The fact that it has two faces is not a negative commentary; it was done to make sure that those approaching from either the north or the south can see who it is, and, in case there is any doubt, a sign underneath says "Thank You, Mr. Gorbachev."

While the approval rating of Gorbachev is way up in some quarters, that of another international hero—Christopher Columbus—is in sharp decline. For at least the past two decades, local Italian-Americans and Latinos have been so eager to claim him that during the second week of October both ethnic groups throw parades up Fifth Avenue in his honor, but this year, the five-hundredth anniversary of his legendary discovery, evidence that he was in fact a villainous figure—particularly information about his treatment of the Indians he found here—has been spreading fast. Though most Latinos and Italian-Americans here will probably still be only too happy to claim him, protests by Native Americans—a term that does not, of course, stand for all Americans who were born in this country—could make the second week in October this year a turbulent time along Fifth Avenue. Dinkins, whose parade plans for that week are unknown, has joined in the condemnation of the explorer, saying, according to his friend the *Post* columnist Cindy Adams, that he and his fellow-blacks were ill treated because, thanks to Columbus's behavior, "African-Americans came here as slaves."

Although after Dinkins took office in January, 1990, he spoke almost daily of the city as a "gorgeous mosaic," and of his pride in being the mayor of such a wonderfully diverse community, his impromptu commentaries recently have often dwelt on his role as an African-American and the affronts to his race throughout history—with the Mayor sometimes resorting to rather unusual interpretations of history. Last month, explaining to a television interviewer the necessity for his eight-day excursion last November to South Africa (with an entourage—not counting press—of fifty), he harked back to 1787, saying that during that year's Constitutional Convention, George Washington and James Madison—both Virginians—had tried to insert a provision that would abolish slavery. "However," he explained, "they lost." If the other nations of the world, he said, had then risen up and announced that they would have nothing to do with the new United States until it abolished slavery, history would have been different. "Medgar Evers would not have been shot," he said. "Those little girls in Birmingham would not have died. And Martin Luther King would not have been killed." Therefore, he told the interviewer, it had been essential for him to go to South Africa and get the word out about the evils of apartheid.

New Yorkers must also adjust to the numbers of the 1990 census, which are now official. For at least a decade, leaders of so-called minority groups have been saying that whites—by which they usually mean non-Hispanic Caucasians—are no longer in the majority in the city, but this is the first time that the census has borne them out. The latest totals show the city to be forty-three per cent white, seven per cent "other" (that is, for the most part, Asian; up five points from 1980), twenty-eight per cent black (which is about the 1980 total), and twenty-four per cent Hispanic. (The fact that nearly half the Hispanics list themselves as white is a complication, though not one that plays much of a role in local ethnic politics.) The new numbers significantly affected the election last fall of a new, enlarged City Council. The first meeting of the newly elected Council was held on January 8th. As provided for in the new city charter, it has fifty-one members, compared with thirty-five in the Council it succeeds. The old Council was seventy-five per cent white, mainly Italian and Jewish; in the class of 1992, twenty-one blacks and Hispanics were elected. The usual breakdown is twelve blacks and nine Hispanics, but Adam Clayton Powell IV has listed himself as a member of both the black and the Hispanic delegations, since his mother is Puerto Rican. It seems likely that Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., the legendary Harlem leader who was the first black member of Congress, would be tickled at the idea that his son can call on support from two ethnic voting blocs.

At the meeting, as expected, Councilman Peter Vallone, of Queens, was reëlected as the Council speaker. It

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was not wholly by acclamation. Last year, Councilman Sal Albanese, of Brooklyn, voted against a measure sponsored and strongly supported by the Speaker. He was stripped of the chairmanship of the Council's Youth Services Committee. This month, sixteen members of the new Council, including Albanese, proposed a series of rules reforms that would have made it easier for individual members to exercise initiative and power—or even to get their measures to the floor. Vallone rejected nearly all of them. Still, fifteen of the reformers voted for him for speaker. Only Albanese cast his vote against, saying that for far too long loyalty to the speaker had been placed above all other loyalties. Councilwoman Carolyn Maloney, of Manhattan, praised Vallone, although she noted that there had been some criticism of him, "and I have not been without sin." "It's never too late to repent, Carolyn," said a voice from the presiding chair—that of Andrew Stein, the president of the City Council. As Vallone was about to be sworn in, he called out to Stein, "This is your chance to switch"—that is, to run for speaker against Vallone—to which Stein's response was "That's not the switch I had in mind." When Council offices and committee assignments were handed out, there was, of course, no committee chairmanship for Albanese, despite his years of seniority. And Vallone's choice for majority whip, the third-highest Council post, was Rafael Castaneira Colon, of the Bronx, who fulfilled the requirement of being a Hispanic but who—from the evidence of his nine years in office, during which he has been widely considered to be, in the journalist Molly Ivins' term for some Texas lawmakers, "legislatively impaired"—could be counted on not to talk back, or do anything much at all, except collect his additional thirteen-thousand-dollar stipend. In the end, things did not seem very different from the old days of the powerful Tammany leaders, who knew who their friends and enemies were and acted accordingly. On the morning after an election in which the candidate of Big Tim Sullivan (a Lower East Side district leader at the turn of the century who often said, "Reform—there's nothing to it") was defeated by a vote of three hundred and sixty-eight to four, Sullivan said, "He got one more vote than I thought he would. But I'll *get* that feller."

Stein's quick rejoinder during the first meeting of the new Council was a reminder to reporters that at mayoral press conferences, after Dinkins reads remarks on a day's issue prepared for him by his staff (almost never diverging from them by so much as a pronoun), there are only a very few subjects that he introduces on his own. He will complain about what he sees as the media's biased coverage of his trip to South Africa and of his administration generally, and he will attack—noisily, angrily—Andrew Stein. Despite his title, Stein has nothing to do with the Council except to preside over its meetings if he feels like it; the office is, in fact, a Vice-President-like post that has no significant assigned duties other than to succeed the top officeholder if there should be a vacancy. When the Mayor goes after Stein, he nearly always proposes that the office be abolished, pointing out that it was retained under the new charter only by an eight-to-six vote of the Charter Revision Commission. The Mayor will then point out that the nearly four-million-dollar annual cost of Stein's office, which includes a staff of sixty, could be put to far worthier use in the city's present troubled fiscal circumstances.

Stein, who, at forty-seven, is seventeen years younger than Dinkins, has made little secret of his intention to take him on in next year's mayoral race. Although former United States Attorney Rudolph Giuliani, the 1989 Republican mayoral candidate, who came within two percentage points of defeating Dinkins, seems to many to be a far more dangerous possible opponent, Stein is clearly more on the Mayor's mind. A ten-page memo that Dinkins' press secretary, Leland Jones, prepared for a luncheon meeting with *Times* editors and reporters last month to document the *Times*' biased coverage—as the Mayor and Jones saw it—of his record in office commented that although it was not yet clear whom the *Times* planned to support for Mayor next year, clues were available. In the

"One cannot think well, sleep well, or love well, if one has not dined well."

—*Virginia Woolf*

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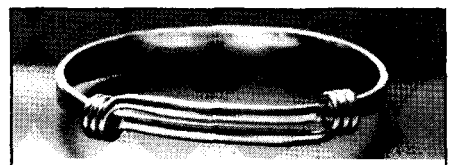

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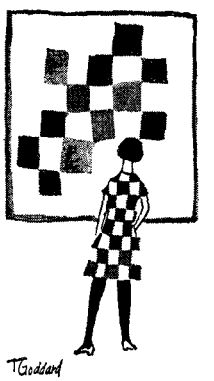
memo Jones cited an August 27th article by Sam Roberts, the *Times*' chief political reporter, which he described as "let me be kind—outrageous." The headline was "STEIN EMERGES AGAIN," the memo pointed out—"notwithstanding the fact that, as it appeared, Mr. Stein was in hiding somewhere deep in the Tetons of Wyoming."

The most recent Dinkins explosion against Stein followed the news that a Stein fund-raiser was scheduled to be held on January 21st at the Waldorf, at fifteen hundred to five thousand dollars a plate, with the total take expected to reach 2.4 million dollars—which would top the 2.2 million raised by George Bush here last November. The Mayor complained to reporters that Stein was building what he called a "war chest" for a mayoral race, which he referred to as if it constituted lèse-majesté, although he himself has announced that he is a candidate for reëlection, and has been raising money for his own campaign—it's the American way. The entertainment to be provided at the Stein fund-raiser was big-draw time: Frank Sinatra, Liza Minnelli, and Shirley MacLaine. Dinkins used some mayoral muscle in an effort to persuade local members of Congress and other officials to whom free tickets were being provided not to accept them. Shirley MacLaine, who has been a friend of Stein's for many years, got in an extra dig against her friend's 1993 rival. Denying she had ever said that she and Stein were married in some previous incarnation, she told *New York* magazine that it was Dinkins she had been married to—and that she had died of boredom.



Early this month, the *Times*—presumably having in mind Dinkins' insistence that previous mayors were not criticized nearly as sharply as he has been, a statement with which previous mayors are not likely to agree—noted in an editorial under the headline "MAYOR HALFWAY," referring to Dinkins' having reached the midpoint in his four-year term at City Hall, that the theory that he is sometimes held to a higher standard because he is black is "not a credible contention." Giuliani, warming up for the 1993 campaign, has accused Dinkins of "whining," and has said, "When you try to play [racial politics] to get yourself out of political difficulty, you're just as responsible for creating racial or ethnic divisions as the people attacking you." Representative Charles Rangel, of Manhattan, a longtime Dinkins ally, responded to Giuliani, "When you're out of a job, it's very hard to make news without being controversial." The 1993 campaign seemed, in fact, to be well under way. The columnist Tom Wicker, in a January 5th interview given as he retired after thirty-odd years with the *Times*, said of present-day conditions here, "My own feeling is that racial animosities and fears in New York City are far greater than anything I ever knew growing up in the segregated South." Dinkins, asked about this judgment at a press conference, said that he did not agree and pointed out that he, an African-American, had been elected mayor of this city—a fact that did not seem to have turned it into a peaceable kingdom.

While some of the contenders are acting as if the next mayoral campaign were already in motion, other New Yorkers are acting as if it were as good as over. "Forget about Cuomo," the *Newsday* columnist Gail Collins wrote the other day. "It's time to start concentrating on our David-Dinkins-for-Vice-President campaign. . . . The last two years have demonstrated that Dinkins has the makings of an extraordinary vice president. He enjoys travel, has a good tuxedo and is smarter than Dan Quayle." Apparently, not all her journalist colleagues concede that last assessment. The Inner Circle, the alliance of local political reporters that each spring puts on a musical lampoon of what's been going on at City Hall, has already chosen the title for this year's show: "Dunces with Wolves."

—ANDY LOGAN

•

RAISED EYEBROWS DEPARTMENT

[*From the Redding (Conn.) Pilot*]

The bride graduated from Joel Barlow High School in 1983 and attended Western Connecticut State University. She works at Discount Liquors Inc. in Danbury.

The groom graduated from North Branford High School in 1983 and attended Western Connecticut State University. He is a foreman at Durkin Awning Inc. in Danbury.

They couple in Danbury.

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A CRITIC AT LARGE

A WOMAN'S PLACE

On a summer day in 1897, Canon Ernest Roland Wilberforce, a member of the great ecclesiastical family that had led the century's battles against slavery and against Darwinism, paid a call on a middle-aged South African lady visitor to London, to ask her aid in bringing about the spiritual regeneration of England. The Canon's confidence in the abilities of this lady, Olive Schreiner, was based on her novel "The Story of an African Farm," whose appearance, fourteen years earlier, had been met with denunciations of blasphemy from some of the sterner Church of England pulpits and with almost commiserating accounts of the snares of agnosticism from more ecumenical platforms. By her own report, Schreiner had hardly set foot in a church since adolescence. In those progressive London quarters where the displaced energies of orthodoxy were being reinvested in the many compensatory religions of late Victorianism—art, philanthropy, socialism, the various ideals of human progress toward perfection on earth—Schreiner's book earned her the position of licensed freethinker, of a dispenser of Truth during the last historical moment when that substance was still widely viewed as sufficiently objective and monolithic to merit a capital initial.

But the Canon—urged on, perhaps, by more than a decade's plummeting Sunday attendance—had his reasons. The continuing popularity of Schreiner's book, in edition after edition, was due largely to a constituency of the spiritual-minded unchurched, an educated and ever-growing population of reluctant unbelievers, who felt themselves cast from the Heaven of their parents and grandparents by the manifest revelations of science. For many of those to whom the irreconcilability of geology and Genesis amounted to a sorrowful enlightenment, an edict of liberation accompanied by a theft of purpose, Schreiner's novel became a kind of guidebook. Selling some hundred thousand copies between its publication, in 1883, and the end of the century, "African Farm" was one of those rare books that are not merely read but copied out and shared and appealed to, a book that was spoken of as affecting courses of action and as providing certain of its readers with freedom of thought while depriving others of peace of mind. Written for an age that fell "between faith and reason," as one of her characters describes it, "African Farm" tempered an insistent rejection of illusion with an exigent passion for the moral and emotional impulses of Christianity. Its message was complex and powerful, and vague enough to offer courage in unexpected directions: John Galsworthy dispensed it to friends troubled with religious doubt; Gladstone thought it proved that God is Love. For the majority of its readers, however, "African Farm" served as a means of internal fortification: it reduced and assuaged the powerful desire to kneel.

The religious theme in fiction was itself anything but new. Schreiner's book appeared, in fact, toward the end of "an age of Religious Novels"—so christened as early as 1846 by the *Dublin Review*, in tallying the new genre at more than a third of the previous year's output of fiction. "Theological romances" were written in demonstration of every conceivable point of contemporary faith and prejudice: anti-Tractarian and evangelical, anti-evangelical and Jesuitical, anti-Jesuitical (plenty of these) and Broad Church, High Church, and no church whatever, with even the last subjected to argumentative and hairsplitting distinctions among freethinkers, agnostics, and atheists. Whether set in the decadent Imperial Rome of the early martyrs or in a modern-day England where conversions and lapses abrogated marriages and tore families apart, the dramatized doctrines and the bickering over incompatible salvations were attended to raptly by several generations, as a continuing celestial soap opera, until the inspirational wellsprings emptied and dried, with categorical abruptness, as the nineties drew to a close.

From this library gone wholly to quaintness and dust Schreiner's book

"Quality time . . . quality time . . ."

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stands out, in part because its position is more inquiring than dogmatic and its questions are so simple and urgent. Her principal characters, a saintly shepherd boy and a rebellious orphan girl, are consumed each by a single idea, forming the book's double theme—he by the injustice of God to men, she by the injustice of men to women. As characters, these two consist of little else, yet their story does not disintegrate into the dry set-piece polemics of Charles Kingsley or of Mrs. Humphry Ward. Olive Schreiner was a missionary's daughter, writing compulsively of her own laborious struggle for intellectual liberty. She started on "African Farm" when she was not much more than twenty years old, and was still living in the orbit of her family and her early moral education, still virtually trembling with the effort of resistance and the agitation of discovery. Her achievement was to take the genre's formulaic admixture of story and argument (a contemporary reviewer listed the issues Schreiner raised as "Orthodox Christianity, Unitarian Christianity, woman suffrage, marriage, Malthusianism, and immortality") and reforge them in the heat of youth, under relentless emotional pressure. The book retains an awkward, self-conscious vitality, as the record of a difficult transitional passage not only in the nineteenth-century history of ideas but in the continual reawakening of those ideas, independently and personally, in maturing minds.

IN the eighteen-eighties, it already seemed ironic and a little shameful that Schreiner's novel was published with the author's name given on the title page as "Ralph Iron." The ploy of using a male pseudonym in order to gain serious attention went back to the Brontës, but by the time "African Farm" appeared, three years after the death of George Eliot, the virile mask amounted to little more than a convention. Eliot herself—who as Mary Ann Evans had offered her own tart opinions of "silly novels by lady novelists"—had been identified after the sensation of her first books, and it was she who made possible the notion of the authoress as social sage; her later works, especially, were intended and accepted as examples of moral philosophy. As happened with the books of her predecessors, Schreiner's "African Farm" was scrutinized for signs of Ralph Iron's true identity—sexual and social—and the male disguise was soon undone. There was hardly a reviewer, in fact, who failed to note that the book was evidently the work of a woman. The deduction was not founded on points of inflection and detail, as had happened with, say, Charlotte Brontë, who was given away by such minutiae as Grace Poole's attention to curtain rings (which went to prove that "Jane Eyre," in the words of one sleuth, "could have been written only by a woman or an upholsterer"). With Schreiner the evidence was far more broad-based, inhering in the desperate earnestness with which the novel struck its second dominating theme: the crushing suppression of possibility in women's lives.

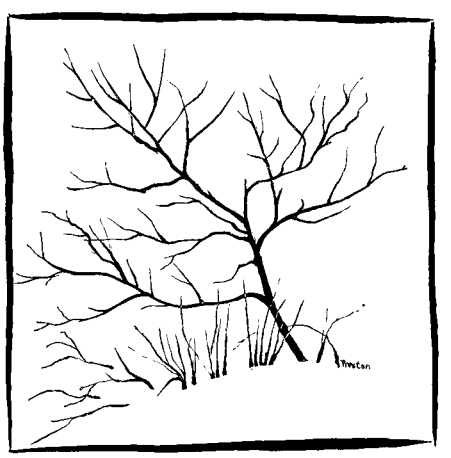
The subject of woman's place was only a little newer to fiction than that of God's absence, and they were not unrelated. For Schreiner's generation, the two had been set side by side in Eliot's novels. Yet Eliot's great works were concerned more with women's obligations than with their rights. If there was no God, it was all the more imperative to behave as though there were, in order to assure motives for ethical behavior and to stave off Germanic nihilism. Social proprieties were the new household gods—if households were to continue, there must be gods—and women were the keepers of the altar. Woman's greatest gift was for "a sublimer resignation" to her lot.

Olive Schreiner wrote "African Farm" at roughly the age at which George Eliot first refused to accompany her father to church. Duty had been the daily bread of Schreiner's missionary upbringing, resignation what she was meant to feel on seeing her brothers sent off to school. To Schreiner these were not noble abstractions but hard and unreasoning—and certainly unsublime—constrictions. If the gods were false, the keepers of the altars were not holy vestals but slaves or fools. Schreiner, who had little ability for characterization, spoke directly through her heroine, and, whatever the artistic failings of the method, the result for the reader was a startling access of self-consciousness, a woman's voice newly direct and insolent and bitter:

> The world tells us what we are to be, and shapes us by the ends it sets before us. To you it says—*Work!* and to us it says—*Seem!* . . . The less a woman has in her head, the lighter she is for climbing.

> Yes, we have power; and since we are not to expend it in tunnelling mountains, nor healing diseases, nor making laws, nor money, nor on any extraneous object, we expend it on *you*. You are our goods, our merchandise, our material for operating on; we buy you, we sell you, we make fools of you. . . . We are not to study law, nor science, nor art; so we study you.

Schreiner read Eliot's "Mill on the Floss" when she was very young, and again after completing "African Farm"; she deemed it suffocating. As a woman who suffered chronically and excruciatingly from asthma, Schreiner was something of a specialist in suffocation. Canon Wilberforce may well have imagined that he would find in her another St. Teresa, capable of shaping the spiritual reform the age demanded (Teresa, after all, had begun as a novelist). But Wilberforce arrived on Schreiner's doorstep in an age which—as George Eliot had warned—could neither create nor support another Teresa, and an age in which even that true Teresa of "far-resonant action" was to be appropriated as patron saint of the epidemic of hysterical illness that disabled and devoured generations of women whose gifts were not for resignation. It was in reference to St. Teresa's career of mysterious physical afflictions that the French neurologist Charcot and, later, Breuer and Freud identified as "stigmata" their female patients' inexplicable ailments: convulsions, obstructed vision, amnesia, depression, loss of speech, anorexia (recently "discovered"), paralysis. Olive Schreiner's asthma was but the central woe in an extensive array of debilities that, as much as any other factor, determined the course of her life. Mental endowment was not excluded by hys-



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terical disease, as Breuer was eager to explain; intelligence was, in fact, rather likely to exceed the average. What was rendered nearly impossible was achievement.

THE title "The Story of an African Farm" is misleading, insofar as these words suggest a chronicle of activity and livelihood and social community, of the prospering interaction of man and land. Schreiner's geography was as alien to English expectations as the remotest reaches of empire would allow: no lowing in the pastures, no rosy dairymaids up to their elbows in curds and whey, but a measureless expanse of arid land burning under a blank sky. Her African terrain was equally far from the beguilingly exotic turquoise-and-gold of the leopard hunt. That sort of adventure was best written in Piccadilly, as Schreiner explained; the artist in Africa "must squeeze the colour from his brush, and dip it into the grey pigments around him." Schreiner's book was the first to place the landscape of the vast and barren South African karroo—like Emily Brontë's moors or Willa Cather's Southwestern mesas—on the map of literature.

In "The Story of an African Farm" the desert itself collaborates in human despair, and it was not beyond English reviewers of the it-can't-happen-here variety to lay blame for the author's desolate vision on the broad and flat-topped African mountains, peakless and unaspiring, which directed thoughts not upward but outward in futile dispersal. Africa was the pathetic fallacy reversed: the dry wilderness imposing its own bleak expressive life on the vision of those who beheld it. In claiming this wasteland for literature, Schreiner provided the twentieth century with a landscape it would require:

> Week after week, month after month, the sun looked down from the cloudless sky, till the karroo-bushes were leafless sticks, broken into the earth, and the earth itself was naked and bare; and only the milk-bushes, like old hags, pointed their shrivelled fingers heavenwards, praying for the rain that never came.

Beneath this pitiless sky lie the scattered buildings of an ostrich farm belonging to the fat and irritable Tant' Sannie, a Boer woman whose occasional moderation of temper is based on the religious conviction that she is spied on and appraised through "chinks in the world above." Growing up beside Sannie's stepdaughter, Em, placid and freckled, is her orphaned cousin, a girl named Lyndall, whose perfections of diminutive beauty, particularly in the matter of hands and feet, are offered for the reader's constant admiration and for piquant contrast with the girl's intellectual grit. (Olive Schreiner stood barely five feet tall; her husband, whose published account of his wife tends toward vituperative damnation, offered praise to the end for her tiny hands and feet.) Lyndall yearns to go to school, but is thwarted by her aunt.

In the farm outbuildings live a genuinely devout German overseer and his son, Waldo, the shepherd with his mind fixed on God. Waldo builds an altar out of stones and watches for a sign, as his offering—the mutton chop of his dinner—melts into pools of fat under the only burning eye his Heaven reveals. Waldo is tormented by doubt—on matters ranging from contradictions in Scripture to the existence of evil—but he is a compulsive believer, a genuine religious spirit.

When Waldo's kindhearted father dies, the one loving parent these children have known is replaced by a near-monster called Bonaparte Blenkins, a red-nosed swindler who flatters his way into Sannie's dumb affections. For an invented trespass Waldo is taken to the fuel house and horribly whipped, with Blenkins' assurances that he is acting as a father, and in accord with God's will: "I hope the Lord will bless and sanctify to you what I am going to do to you." That night, alone and bleeding in the dark—"he had not dared to stand still, and he had not known it would end"—Waldo prays, and his prayers meet, again, with silence.

At this turning point, Schreiner's narrative halts. In the novel's second section, we are returned to Waldo's spiritual search, taken up again from the beginning—this time as it unfolds in the mind of the boy himself. Never an easy or vivid storyteller, Schreiner slips almost gratefully into the strangely modern device of a soft, crooning monologue of drifting consciousness, strewn with Waldo's childhood memories—"We pull the green leaves softly into pieces to see the silk threads run across"—and culminating in the night that he howls and prays in the fuel house, and reaches his

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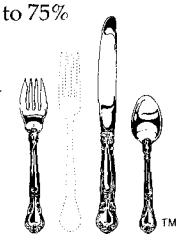

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conclusion: "Now we have no God."

Three years go by. A stranger rides onto the farm; he is the authorial voice on horseback, and the story he tells to Waldo forms what Schreiner (and many of her readers) saw as the allegorical core of the book. In the story, a hunter searches for "a vast white bird," which is Truth, and which he has seen only as a reflection on the water. His search brings him through the Land of Absolute Negation and Denial; it requires the release of the seductive black bird called Immortality. Pressing onward, the hunter passes his life hacking a series of stairs out of the sheer, towering rock of a mountainside. He never reaches the top—never glimpses Truth—but dies in the happiness of knowing that others will climb higher, by using the steps he has cut. At the last, a white feather drifts down into his hand.

Waldo, for one, is mightily impressed. The modern reader is in something of the position of the narrator observing the boy's overexcited reaction: "There was something superbly ridiculous, unless one chanced to view it in another light." The philosophical Stranger leaves the boy with one last lesson: "To all who have been born in the old faith there comes a time of danger, when the old slips from us, and we have not yet planted our feet on the new." But that new life will come, someday, although "we of this generation are not destined to eat and be satisfied as our fathers were; we must be content to go hungry." Then the Stranger pulls a book from his saddlebag—"It may give you a centre round which to hang your ideas"—and rides off.

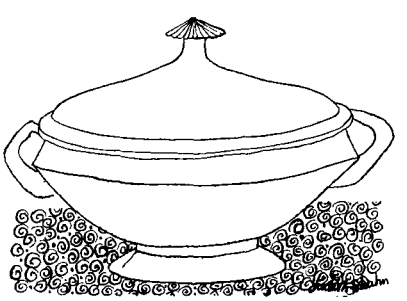
In the years that follow, the proud and independent Lyndall fulfills her dream by getting herself sent away to school, but she returns in disillusionment and bitterness. Girls' finishing schools are machines for compressing the human soul into the smallest possible area: "I have seen some souls so compressed that they would have fitted into a small thimble." She wears a ring set with diamonds, but claims that it betokens no engagement: "I am not in so great a hurry to put my neck beneath any man's foot; and I do not so greatly admire the crying of babies." Her sardonic awareness of her beauty almost redeems the author's Thumbelina descriptions: Lyndall allows herself the pleasure of thought only "when I am not too busy to find a new way of doing my hair that will show my little neck to better advantage," as she says. "Professional duties always first, you know."

Waldo goes off to see the world. Lyndall's ring-giver appears, and, though she refuses to marry him—she does not love him—she agrees to run away with him, deep into the Transvaal. Lyndall, one finally learns, is pregnant. Her baby dies after three hours, and—in a singular touch of Victorian madness—Em's beau, who has fallen in love with Lyndall, dresses in women's clothing in order to be near her and to nurse her through her last illness. Lyndall dies, rather vaguely, but presumably of complications from childbirth, aged seventeen. Her final epigrammatic insights (Gladstone copied them out in his diary) show a new, resigned grace: "Holiness is an infinite compassion for others," and the seemingly most un-Lyndall-like "Happiness is a great love and much serving."

Waldo returns and hears the news, and all the religious consolations he has known or read of race through his head, concluding with:

> The soul's fierce cry for immortality is this, —only this: —Return to me after death the thing as it was before. . . . Your immortality is annihilation, your Hereafter is a lie. . . . All dies, all dies! the roses are red with the matter that once reddened the cheek of the child.

Only in the obliterating unity of the cycles of nature, this flux where death is change, is there any comfort. Almost at peace with the thought, Waldo goes out to sit in the sunshine at the side of the wagon house, among the startled, scattering chickens. And he dies there, just sitting, and of no apparent cause. Schreiner doesn't even propose a broken heart. The death is very gently managed: lifted, actually, from the scene in "Wuthering Heights" where Nelly Dean goes to tell Heathcliff of Cathy's death—he, of course, already knows—and finds him having stood all night



so still against the old ash tree that the dew has soaked his hair and the birds pass around him fearlessly. The homely chickens of the African farm—now Em's farm—are so sure that this particular being poses no further threat that they clamber freely onto his shoulders and his hands, and nestle to sleep in his coat sleeves. Em, who comes to set a glass of milk by his side, says to herself, "He will wake soon." Olive Schreiner concludes, "But the chickens were wiser."

LYNDALL—a name that "African Farm" made popular for South African girls—was the family name of Schreiner's mother, Rebekah Lyndall. The daughter of a London evangelical minister, Rebekah attributed her missionary commitment to the fervor aroused during an antiphonal hymn at a revival meeting: "Who will go and join the throng?" "*I* will go and join the throng." She was, by all accounts, well educated and intelligent, an accomplished young woman. In 1837, she married Gottlob Schreiner, a Lutheran from Germany, a former shoemaker, who had been sent to London to continue his missionary training. Rebekah was nineteen.When she and her new husband entered the vestry to sign their names, the minister tore the wreath off her bonnet as unbefitting a missionary's bride. The couple set off for Africa three weeks later—just a few months after Victoria came to the throne and three years before Dr. Livingstone embarked for the "Dark Continent."

In Africa, Rebekah bore twelve children in twenty-four years. Five died in infancy or very young, the normal perils of childhood exacerbated by the dreadful conditions and acute privations of the missionary life. Gottlob, a man of guileless love and fervent dedication, was a pronounced worldly failure even there: falling into disgrace with distant authorities through various infractions, he had to abandon mission after mission, dragging his family behind him. They managed with no roads, no sanitation, and often no home at all, the family living in wagons or in other people's outbuildings. There are tales of floods and of other catastrophes, and occasional mention of Rebekah's suffering from what Gottlob identified as "inflammation of the brain." Gottlob was eventually stripped of his missionary status

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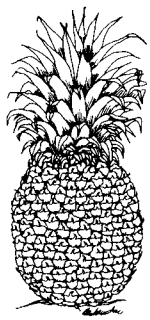
altogether, but at the time of Olive's birth, in 1855—the ninth child, with three already buried—the Schreiners had found temporary peace at a station in Wittebergen, on the edge of Basutoland. Even here Rebekah had a devastating range of household tasks to perform: the cooking, the sweeping and whitewashing of rooms, the making of clothes and of shoes, the rearing and basic education of the children. Olive Schreiner remembered Rebekah walking wearily out into the African twilight with a book under her arm when the children were finally put to bed. She envisioned her mother—"with her French and Italian, her flower painting and music"—as a grand piano closed up and locked, and tragically mistaken for a common dining table.



As a mother, Rebekah was cold and strict, having charged herself with the perfect preservation of London drawing-room gentilities even in the rudest mud hut—indeed, there more than anywhere, as insulation from the "gross sensual heathen" (Rebekah's words) among whom the family lived. It wasn't only black Africans' example that had to be repelled. Olive Schreiner's most searing early memory was of a beating—fifty strokes with a bundle of quince rods—that she received from her mother at the age of five, for the offense of exclaiming "*Ach*, how nice it is outside," the meaningless exclamatory *Ach* being Dutch—that is, Afrikaans, and therefore vulgar. English was the sole language permitted in the household. (Olive's German father, it may be noted, was self-consciously ill at ease with English all his life.) "The bitter wild fierce agony in my heart was against God and man," she wrote of that beating many years later, and she clearly recast it as Waldo's faith-breaking ordeal in the fuel house, although even all-suffering Waldo is spared the lesson that unmerited pain may be delivered by the most righteous and beloved of hands.

Schreiner wrote—in letters—of only one other beating, meant to quell her self-will: she had stepped into the doorway to catch raindrops in her hand after being told to remain inside. She noted, however, that the two beatings "did me such immense harm that I think they have permanently influenced my life," and explained, "They made me hate everything in the heavens above and on the earth beneath." But the girl's wild anger was subverted by an intense and almost equally unbearable sympathy—a sympathy for whatever suffered—which had its share in the growth of the woman's broad ethic of compassion and in her politics of emotional socialism.

That sympathy only increased with a tragedy that further challenged the credibility and the succor of conventional belief. "The most important event of my childhood," Schreiner wrote, was the birth of a baby sister, Ellie. "My love for her has shaped all my life." The love long outlived the child, who died at the age of eighteen months, when Olive was nine years old. It was this small death that, Olive recalled, "first made me realise the falsity of what I had been taught and made a freethinker of me."

By the time Olive Schreiner wrote about this loss, thirty years after the experience, she admitted to feeling none of the heaven-storming enmity that marks the diaries and letters of other nineteenth-century women of religious conscience—women like Annie Besant, who had been a minister's pious wife—whose faith was snapped through witnessing the suffering or death of a child. By contrast, Olive Schreiner recalled the death of her sister as an experience more akin to a giving than to a taking, as the revelation of something larger and deeper than could be contained by the creed she had been taught. Bereavement carried her once and for all beyond the orthodox presumption of a select and exclusionary salvation. In a letter of 1892 she replied to questions about her religious faith, posed by an evangelical minister on the brink of resigning his post, with the lesson of her sister's death: "I cannot conceive of either birth or death, or anything but simple changes in the endless existence: how can I then believe or disbelieve in Immortality in the ordinary sense? . . . I used to love the birds and animals and inanimate nature better after she was dead; the whole of existence seemed to me more beautiful because it had brought forth and taken back to itself such a beautiful thing as she was to me."

Schreiner's childhood thirst for transcendence and her budding moral

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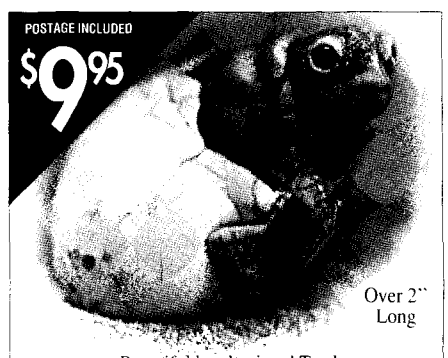
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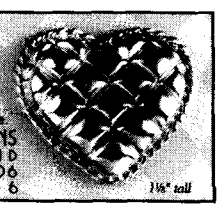
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intuition were nourished by volumes of Emerson and of Mill—she scorned romances and hardly admitted to reading novels—and, above all, by one book that seemed to explain fully the inner workings of existence itself: "First Principles," by the English savant Herbert Spencer. Although this book had provided the same revelatory function for legions of readers since its publication, in 1862, Spencer is perhaps best remembered today as the dyspeptic and emotionally obtuse man of ideas who won George Eliot's heart and returned it untouched, fathoming neither its depths nor its value. His Casaubon-like life's achievement, the "Synthetic Philosophy," in ten volumes (of which "First Principles" was, naturally, the first), accounted for all phenomena—from the solar system and nature to human thought and culture—through patterns of evolution based on the sharing and redistribution of matter and energy. The man who swore to George Eliot that he never frowned, because he was never puzzled, had a formula—the same formula—for everything.

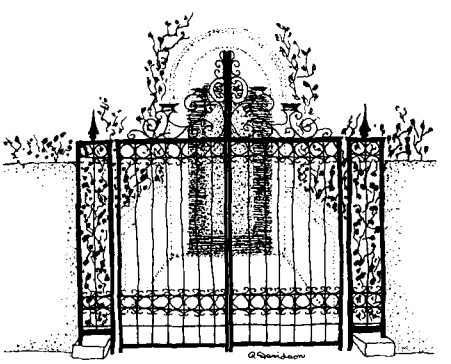
While hardly among the first to offer the ideal of Progress on earth as the thinking person's replacement for Heaven after death, Spencer was one of the few who thought the offer guaranteed: fulfillment was a matter of time, the world was on course. This was freethinking with a net, and it wasn't the only one Spencer offered, or even the largest one. For the ball of Herbert Spencer's universe was set rolling toward perfection by an all-purpose God-who-would-not-speak-His-name, who exists in Spencer's terminology as the Unknowable: "an Infinite and Eternal Energy whence all things proceed." The First Principle itself stated that all that was objectively knowable—the contents of all those coming volumes—rested upon "an Absolute that transcends not only human knowledge but human conception." Here was a tower of reason founded on a cushion of air: not only were religion and science not incompatible; they were hardly distinguishable.

It was "First Principles" that saved the teen-age Olive Schreiner from furious atheism and despair, and enabled her to write what her contemporaries called "an agnostic novel"—a designation attesting to the value of that new-minted word as a compromise between belligerent denial and conciliation. "First Principles" was given to Olive Schreiner by the first "freethinker" she ever met, a young man called Willie Bertram, who passed through her life for only a few hours, on a tour of inspection for the Native Affairs Department. It became, accordingly, the mysterious book that the Stranger gave to Waldo "round which to hang your ideas"—a fact Schreiner volunteered to various friends; the book is named among the small collection that Waldo takes away from the farm. "First Principles" was for Schreiner what "The Way of a Pilgrim" was to her twentieth-century sister Franny Glass: a spiritual how-to for sneaking past reason and up to God. ("African Farm" itself became one of those books.) Willie Bertram committed suicide at the age of thirty-five, and even Herbert Spencer was reported to have said, toward the end of his days, "I have passed my life in beating the air." Olive Schreiner was told, after Spencer's death, that during the old man's final illness he had asked to have read to him the allegory of the hunter seeking Truth, from "The Story of an African Farm."

IN 1881, when Olive Schreiner was twenty-six and had been working as a governess on a series of isolated homesteads, she sent off an application for nurse's training to the Royal Infirmary in Edinburgh.

> Religion: Freethinker—Father Lutheran
> Weight: There are no scales here
> Where Educated: At home

Through diligence and ingenious methods of forestalling sleep, she had already written two novels and several stories, in full or in part; a version of "African Farm" had been sent off to a publisher the previous year and returned with a list of suggested revisions. Longing for escape, she now envisaged a medical career. In later



years, when her invalidism was well established, Schreiner claimed alternatively to have been a sickly or a robust child, depending on the effect desired: lifelong suffering or dramatic collapse. She dated the onset of her asthma to a wagon journey of some four days' duration, made in cold rain and without food, when her father had lost yet another position and she was sent from her parents' home—in early adolescence—to live with an older sister. It was not the trip itself but the attempt to eat again, upon arrival, that brought on acute pains in her chest and stomach, pains that were to plague her all her life.

The voyage to England, en route to Edinburgh, was difficult for her. Arriving in March, 1881, she wrote in her journal, "I have not much hope. I shall *never* be well." In the nursing program, she lasted three days; an older brother, Fred, was called north from his home in England to rescue her. After recovering that summer under Fred's protection—throughout her years in England, her "Dadda," as she called him, provided financial support and, in times of crisis, a physical haven—she began a course of training at the Women's Hospital, in one of the poorer sections of London. There she lasted five days before "inflammation of the lungs" forced her withdrawal. Another period of rest was sponsored by Fred, following which she began to attend lectures at the Women's Medical School. "The second lecture I went to I got my feet wet and sat in wet boots and got congestion of the lungs," she wrote home. "I am very strong and well now, but have made up my mind that scribbling will be my only work in life."

In the winter of 1882, Schreiner carried her revised manuscript of "African Farm" from publisher to publisher. It was accepted, finally, by no less a figure than George Meredith, an author himself well practiced in matters of the woman's predicament, his most recent heroine having been nearly married off in exchange for a cellar of port; two years after "The Egoist," Meredith was working as a reader for the firm of Chapman & Hall. The publisher's only request of Schreiner was that the pregnant Lyndall be allowed a lawful wedding—a mere two or three lines—in order to placate the railway booksellers. The request was, of course, hotly refused. "The Story of

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"No news is good news."

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an African Farm" was published, in two volumes, in early 1883, its spine embossed with a gold ostrich and its cover with a bit of desert landscape. The newly celebrated author was then living in a London boarding house, almost without acquaintances. She had spent much of the past two years—by her own account—in crying and in administering to herself large doses of potassium bromide, intended to suppress the action of her nervous system.

This constricted life opened out with a letter of admiration from a young medical student and aspiring literary critic named Havelock Ellis. "African Farm" had meant a great deal to him, he wrote, and he remarked on its affinities with the works of Thomas Hardy, whom Schreiner had not read. Ellis, four years younger than Schreiner, was a man of delicate health and mild but steady disposition. He had lost his religious faith in adolescence and sought palliatives similar to those found and now offered by Schreiner. (In the first bloom of his crisis, Ellis had written to Herbert Spencer but was discouraged from discipleship by a form-letter response.)

Ellis was soon introducing Schreiner into the progressive London circles of utopian societies and dream-ridden fellowships. She joined the Fellowship of the New Life—Ellis was a founder, George Bernard Shaw an early and mostly irate member—which was committed to the advent of socialist politics and sexual equality via "the cultivation of a perfect character for each and all." The overwhelming unlikelihood of achieving this required first step—a pure and unspotted soul demonstrated by every member—rendered any practical outcome of the Fellowship's efforts virtually unthinkable. Mutual self-examination came to seem not its means but its goal, attained in an atmosphere of earnest Ciceronian titillation.

Havelock Ellis was himself interested very little in politics and very much in sex. Among the earliest "scientific" explorers of sexuality ("Perhaps some of the ideals you have realized in life have also been mine," Freud gracefully acknowledged), he meticulously studied, interviewed, catalogued, classified, and duly published, in many volumes. Ellis might be called the Herbert Spencer of sex: all-encompassing; immensely popular and useful in his time (his was a strong voice for tolerance); soon outdated and unread. There is another parallel: as Spencer elaborated theories of life in isolation from any contact with mere vulgar living, so Ellis became the paramount English authority on an act that he himself was for long years—for his full lifetime, according to his most recent biographer—incapable of committing. His enduring virginity perhaps lent him a certain objectiveness in his field of endeavor.

Olive Schreiner was the first woman Ellis loved. She taught him—as he said, gratefully—"to be *able* to long." He enabled her to fulfill her interest in medicine by encouraging her in her

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role of perpetual patient. This design was carried out as much by her needs and maneuvers as by his. In her letters to him Schreiner shifts from discussions of books and literary techniques to feeble cries of pain when she suspects that she has angered him; ever after, his sympathetic ear brings out the fullest play of her every wretched symptom. Ellis was tender, solicitous, devoted, and able to prescribe and deliver drugs: the potassium bromide she was already taking, and also quinine, chlorodyne, and, on occasion, opium pills and morphine.

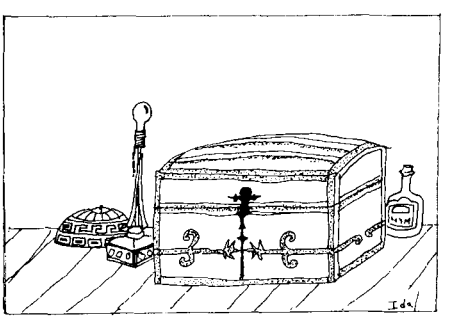
As a pair, they struggled on in perpetual joint opposition to what they helplessly were, to what their times had made them. He revered her intellect; he suggested that thinking too hard brought an excess of blood to her head. She recounted every aspect of her sexual experiences to him, and he maintained dutiful records of such information as her longing for a past lover to tread on her and stamp her "fine into powder." Neither took cognizance of the difficulties that such longings might cause a mind set on a hard and tenuous independence. She aimed at seducing him, and, although they were never "what can be technically, or even ordinarily, called lovers"—in Ellis's words—they were intimates up to that point, and perhaps, as Ellis would have maintained, beyond it. Evidence of both the physical extent and the temperamental limits of their relationship is offered by one of Ellis's slyer comments in recalling a few days' idyll spent together outside London. He had brought along his microscope for her use, he wrote. "She wished to observe living spermatozoa, which there was no trouble in obtaining."

For Schreiner, the relationship was insufficient. She continued to keep Ellis abreast of her multiplying symptoms, but she drifted from his day-to-day life, leaving the Fellowship of the New Life for a rebel offshoot, the Men and Women's Club. There, between lectures on the sex lives of Periclean Greeks, medieval Russians, and early Buddhists, the man with whom she soon fell hopelessly in love—an academic mathematician, Karl Pearson—and the man who fell just as hopelessly in love with her—Dr. Bryan Donkin, the Marx family physician—could joust in her presence on the question of the existence and the degree of the sexual instinct in women.

Olive Schreiner signed one of her letters to Karl Pearson "your man-friend"—letters to Ellis were often signed "your little sister" or even "your little child"—and, far from complaining of her pains and inadequacies, she strove to produce for him an air of brisk competence and intellectual readiness. She had written little and published nothing since "African Farm." To Pearson she now, in 1886, outlined a plan for a comprehensive study of woman's place in world society, to be based on "scientific" data and to range from cave life through Greece and Rome to the future. The history of women had been one of Pearson's strong private interests, and she may have hoped for a collaboration. Instead, he pronounced her the better person for the job and handed over the notes of several years' preliminary research. She suggested other collaborations. She became jealous of the women in his life while claiming not to be one herself. He rejected her or withdrew from her, and she broke down completely. Poor Dr. Donkin found her "in a state of complete temporary madness" and tried to intervene, encouraging Pearson to come to her.

If Pearson came, he didn't stay long. Mortified, Schreiner wrote him a letter of staunch denial. "I never thought you loved me as a woman. You are drawn to me intellectually and I am of great interest to you." Donkin's interpretation of her breakdown had been mistaken: "You will forgive him. I do." She sent Pearson a final gift: her childhood Bible. Then she packed her bags and left the country.

SCHREINER spent the better part of the next three years travelling in Italy and in Switzerland, continually on the move, constantly in pain, sending Ellis agonized letters with pleas for drugs: "What is given for hysteria? (Awful sensitiveness in lower part of body.) Isn't valerian a good thing?"



For outsiders she could still summon an appearance of daunting, almost pugnacious strength. Even so dedicated and influential an agnostic as Leslie Stephen found her "a desperate free-thinker," and also "hard and conceited." (Such "conceit" seems to have been a specifically female affliction, almost a clinical one. When Stephen's own daughter Virginia, aged fifteen, showed symptoms of hysteria some two years after the death of her mother—anorexia, depression, irrational fears—the London specialist who was called in pointed to an excessive level of education and corresponding mental activity; more than a decade later he was treating the now adult Virginia Woolf for the same problems. "The danger of solitary work and want of social friction may be seen in conceit developing into insanity," he wrote.)

Schreiner labored in weary confusion at her second novel and—perhaps—at the big projected history of women, but what she managed to write was a stream of symbolic "Dreams," brief allegories on her old themes. She claimed that they came to her whole, unaided by her; they could not be criticized, because they were not "written." Published individually in London newspapers, and then in 1890 as a collection, the "Dreams" met with success, championed by the likes of Shaw and Oscar Wilde. They seem today at once affecting and almost comically overwrought. A flat, oracular tone replaces the youthful breathlessness of "African Farm." God has emerged from hiding with a quantity of epigrammatic reassurances: "In the least Heaven sex reigns supreme; in the higher it is not noticed; but in the highest it does not exist." The sole poignant note in this little story of the three Heavens, in which a single creature rises to the highest sexlessness, comes in Schreiner's slipping from the pronominal "it," with which the narrator remarks the risen creature, into God's own careless use of "he." The battle within was always the hardest one; she was as exhausted as she claimed to be.

IN late 1889, Schreiner returned to southern Africa—not a country, and no longer even resembling a colony so much as a British-controlled corporation overseeing diamond and gold production. In London, she had come

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to a sense of political futility—all that talk changing nothing. Now she was a great local celebrity in a small and volatile society, and her opinions carried force. These were slow in developing. For a long while, she rebelled against the trespasses and the materialism of the British by romanticizing the scrubbed and sturdy farming families of the Boer republics, who had come to Africa to live and work the land, not to rob it and flee. She saw no other claims, and was long considered a powerful friend—later, even an apologist—for the cause of the white Afrikaners.

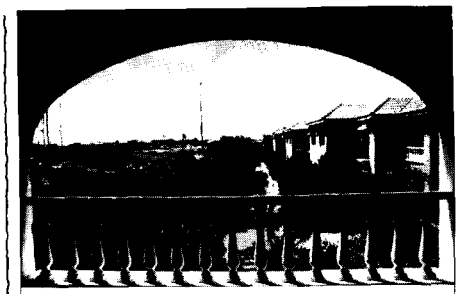
Despite this partisanship, Schreiner was captivated by the British empire-builder Cecil Rhodes, even comparing that ruthless arch-exploiter with her own dreamy Waldo. (Rhodes adored "African Farm.") He was to her "the only big man we have here." Schreiner stood in furious public disagreement with Rhodes over his parliamentary support for the so-called Strop Bill, which authorized flogging and imprisonment for workers in the mines. But a bond of personal affection is still apparent in a skit that she wrote: Rhodes is sent to Hell but turned away, because he is too large to fit through the gates; a special place must be found for him upstairs. Schreiner's first stirrings of concern for the native African population—seldom noticed by her before, and then only in the gross stereotypes of her childhood—seem to have begun at this time, in a surge of empathy brought on by her own memories of being whipped. Of her rediscovered homeland she writes to a friend, "There are money-making whites and downtrodden blacks and nothing in between. And things will have to be so much worse here before they can be better."

In December, 1892, Schreiner met another would-be Waldo. Samuel Cronwright was a young farmer—eight years her junior—who had given up thoughts of a church career when beset by religious doubts. By the time he read "African Farm," two years before meeting its author, Cronwright felt he had already lived through the book's spiritual struggles. He emerged from Schreiner's work "more than ever a Freethinker," newly impressed by "the imperativeness of mental truth." He vowed that if he ever met Lyndall he would marry her.

The real Lyndall, when he did meet her, struck him as very strong, very bold, fearlessly opinionated, "just life and force and brilliancy personified." She liked him, too. Her first letter after their meeting assured him that "a short description of the ostrich and its habits, as you would write it, would be of real value." To this end, she offered the literary services of her agent in London. She sent Cronwright some of her allegories, making certain to correct any false impression that might arise: "I do not think the celibate life the ideal." Cron, as she called him, was soon sent off to meet Rebekah, now a widow and retired to a Roman Catholic convent. The telegram that mother sent daughter leaped back more than fifty stark years to recall a bride with forbidden flowers on her hat: "Called. Feast reason. Mental champagne."

Cronwright was no intellectual gentleman farmer. He was a man of almost vainglorious physical strength, who sweated proudly over his eleven thousand acres, who bragged of sitting bucking horses and hefting hundred-pound bags of grain—a single-bullet leopard-and-antelope man. The letter Rebekah sent after her telegram fairly cooed over "his physical manliness, his muscular prowess"—perhaps one should recall that it was Cronwright who published the letters—and Olive requested a photograph of him in rolled-up shirtsleeves to take with her on a trip back to England.

Her reasons for the trip are not quite clear. She sailed a day before her younger brother Will was sworn in as attorney general of the Rhodes Cabinet, but her plans were made well before that, and her mind was not on politics. A clue may lie in a story she wrote before she left and which she immediately sent to Cronwright: a retelling of her disastrous parting from Pearson, in which a nameless and cynical hero awakens to the love of a nameless, wise, and infinitely self-controlled heroine just as she vanishes forever, from the room and from his life; she has gone off to India, alone, seeking knowledge. Schreiner penned a farewell to Cronwright—"my brother, my boy"—and informed him of a plan



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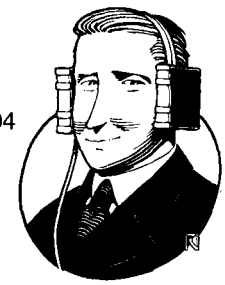

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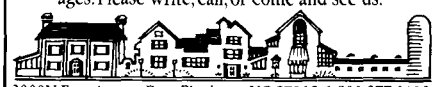

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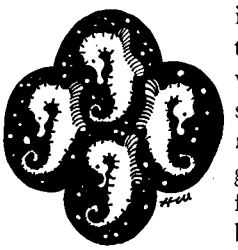
to settle down in Europe to finish one of her "big books." It is likely that he had proposed to her, and that her resistance, as with her breakdown over Pearson, was both genuine—she desperately required the financial independence another book would provide—and contrived. In her journal she muses over whether or not he will follow. In England, she stayed among friends, and her writing was confined to long letters back to Cronwright. By August, the marriage was set.



Set—and nearly destroyed by a confession that Schreiner apparently made immediately upon her return to the Cape that fall. Cronwright's coyly edited letters leave us such hints and elisions as "Cron, it was all my fault about X. . . . Your Olive was so weak and she's so ashamed." Without direct accusation Cronwright makes it easy to suppose a sexual transgression, although none of her subsequent biographers have in fact so supposed; these letters have been either ignored or consigned to ineffable mystery. Circumstances would have been especially opportune during her stay at a free-spirited ashram that an old friend, Edward Carpenter, had set up in Derbyshire, a kind of proto-hippie commune where city bohemians and Oxford dons mixed with the brawnier class of local quarrymen and colliers—the place where E. M. Forster was to be literally touched into writing the sexually explicit "Maurice" by a hand placed on his backside. (The hand belonged to George Merrill, Carpenter's longtime lover. "I believe he touched most people's," Forster noted.)

Once back in Africa, Schreiner was too sick to rise from her bed. Cronwright saw her once and then seems to have turned his back. She sent word that she could not walk, could not speak. She wrote letters of supplication and quivering self-abasement, begging that her "wickedness and weakness" should not shake his ideal. In "African Farm," Lyndall sneers at woman's ever-present easy way out: "A little weeping, a little wheedling, a little self-degradation, a little careful use of our advantages, and then some man will say—'Come, be my wife.' " Lyndall was seventeen; Olive Schreiner was now thirty-eight. She and Cronwright were married, by civil ceremony, on February 24, 1894.

The marriage wasn't a giving up. It was, on the part of both, a difficult effort to meet a stern ideal. He took her name, becoming Samuel Cronwright-Schreiner, and she kept her own: she felt herself already too well known for anything else. They signed an ante-nuptial contract that kept their properties and incomes separate. In marriage, a woman had to be "absolutely and entirely monetarily independent of the man," she wrote to a friend. "That is the great thing; let love bind you, not a common account in the bank." The fact is that her writing brought her very little money. With the steady aid of her brother Fred now concluding in a dowry gift, she would continually fall back on Cronwright's benefactions and on carefully accounted and unrepayable "loans."

The newlyweds settled down in happiness on his farm. Within weeks, she found that she could not breathe; there were terrible asthma attacks every night. She said the siting was bad. Cronwright felt he had married a genius ("In Olive I had a sacred trust"), and he agreed to give up his farm and move with her to a place where she could live and work in peace. He did not yet know that there was no such place. She knew it—as early as 1885 she had written to Ellis, "It isn't my chest, it isn't my legs, it's I myself, my life"—but her knowledge was intermittent, pushed aside, unendurable. She asked for two years on a homestead that she bought for them—he would be without occupation there—in order to complete the "big novels" that she was working on; she aimed at making them both financially independent. In the four years they went on to live there, Schreiner did not write any "big" books but, rather, political pamphlets and articles and speeches, often in collaboration with Cronwright. She had a baby—her only one, a girl—who lived only sixteen hours. The child was buried in their garden. When they moved, the coffin went with them.

In 1896, Schreiner completed a long story, a political allegory based on Cecil Rhodes' most recent and brutal retaliations against uprisings of the Matabele and the Mashona, long residents of the state that was to become Rhodesia. The hero of her title, "Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland," is a softish English soldier in Rhodes' company, not much more than a boy, whose routine racial and cultural presumptions are tinged with revulsion at the beatings and hangings and shootings carried out and often enjoyed by his companions. Alone one night at a desert campfire, he is visited by a barefoot man of mercy, a Jew from Palestine (" 'Have you ever been without grub?' said Peter cheerfully. . . . 'Forty days and nights,' said the stranger"), who wins his allegiance. The next morning, Peter cuts loose a native prisoner and is summarily shot by his commander. "Trooper Peter" was issued on its own, in 1897, as a novella. Its frontispiece was a photograph of a large spreading tree in the African landscape, eight white frontiersmen calmly disposed beneath it and three black men hanging from its boughs.

The Cronwright-Schreiners travelled together to London in January, 1897, to see to the new work's publication. It was during this extended visit that both Canon Wilberforce and a Wesleyan minister, Hugh Price Hughes—encouraged, doubtless, by the materialization of the figure of Jesus in her narrative—paid separate calls on Schreiner, appealing for her spiritual force. "Trooper Peter" was, as could have been predicted, a polemical bombshell. *The Spectator's* review suggested that it might have been another "Uncle Tom's Cabin" but for Schreiner's no longer acceptable inflated rhetoric. In New York, the *Tribune* blasted, "Let the English explain away, if they can, the murder and rapine which Olive Schreiner lays at their doors." As for Schreiner, she spoke of "Trooper Peter" sometimes as her most important work, at other times as a complete failure: it didn't save a single life. The unnerving photograph was removed from later editions. When the novella was published in South Africa, in 1974, the frontispiece was restored, but with the plate tipped in for easy removal in case of censorship.

For Samuel Cronwright, "Trooper Peter," despite its impact, was not what she had promised—not one of the "big books" she had set out to write. Indeed, "she did not seem to remember that I had taken the grave step of giving up my livelihood at her special request." If Wilberforce had expected Olive Schreiner to be another St. Teresa, Cronwright had believed she could become another George Eliot. She

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aroused the expectations; she lived in their daily smashup.

Cronwright took back what he could of his life. There was no money for a new farm, but he trained for the law in Johannesburg, and eventually became a businessman and a member of the Cape Parliament. He and Schreiner shared a political life, campaigning against the outbreak and the continuation of the Boer War. In 1900, Cronwright went alone on a six-month speaking tour of England to rally antiwar support. Other years, they were apart for similar lengths of time, as Schreiner would go off for months—usually to the coast during the hot African summers—in search of air and calm. During these periods, she wrote to Cronwright constantly, letters of vague politics and insistent devotion. By 1906, there were marked changes. A suffragist friend had given her W. E. B. Du Bois's "The Souls of Black Folk," and she wrote to Cronwright that she no longer cared for the Boer cause: "They are more than able to take care of themselves. But the Natives are always with me." To her old friend Ellis she wrote brightly of her continuing faith in the greatness of human nature, "though my personal life has become crushed and indifferent to me."

The rights of the native Africans were now annexed to her political vigilance, as a cause second only to the rights of women. In a country with a color bar, these were not distinct issues: a founder, in 1907, of the Women's Enfranchisement League, Schreiner resigned when its objective was formulated as the winning of the vote on the same terms as it was held by men in southern Africa. She would not cut the moral knot, would not abandon women of color, no matter how much longer—how impractical—the resulting wait for all. (She would, of course, be waiting still.)

In these years, Schreiner completed all she ever would of the "sex book" proposed to Pearson decades ago. The tract, called "Woman and Labour," published in London in 1911, reëstablished her reputation as a social prophet. The purpose and vigor of woman's long history of necessary labor, she argued, had been replaced first by the use of slavery, as in ancient Greece, and now by modern industry, and each had transformed woman herself into "the 'fine lady,' the human female parasite—the most deadly microbe which can make its appearance on the surface of any social organism." In the modern age, Schreiner wrote, cultural decline was sure to follow from the passive condition of idle women, whose marriages were less partnerships than prostitutions. (Schreiner had evidently read Engels on the origins of the family.) As mothers—and Schreiner revered motherhood—women shaped the entire race with each new generation, for better or for worse. The parasitism of the childbearing woman, a kind of mental gout, could lead only to "the enervation and degeneration of a class or race." With women's traditional work at the spinning wheel and grindstone and hoe securely eliminated, the solution to this dilemma was the book's great battle cry: "We take all labour for our province!"

Schreiner's book was received by many as "the Bible of the Women's Movement." Forty-five years after John Stuart Mill first introduced a parliamentary petition for woman suffrage in England, seven years before the vote was won, the plain message of "Woman and Labour" still hit like a news dispatch: there was no work or profession for which a woman, simply by her nature as a woman, was unfit. "There is no fruit in the garden of knowledge it is not our determination to eat," Schreiner maintained, and her book influenced many a decision to go to university or to otherwise seek out a life apart from that prepared for the English young lady. D. H. Lawrence set his Ursula Brangwen under a hawthorn tree during a school-dinner break with a copy of "Woman and Labour" and all her longings for "some other life besides . . . housework and hanging about," her bold desire even "to earn something."

The narrowness of the book's range—its concentration on the relatively limited problem of contemporary middle- and upper-class "parasitism"—was due to its nature as a fragment of a larger work. In her introduction Schreiner sketched the whole as it would have stood: chapters on lower biological forms and on women in the "savage and in the semi-savage state"; physiological

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studies to explain the pain of childbirth and to suggest that woman—not man—first rose onto two legs (under the necessity of carrying her young while seeking food or escaping from enemies); a concluding investigation of the new women's movement and its consequences for society. All this near-lifetime of work, she explained—twelve chapters carefully researched and analyzed, and typewritten and bound—had been burned in a fire set to papers taken from her desk when her Johannesburg house was looted by British soldiers during the Boer War. She had not been living in the house at the time, but in a small town up north, where she had been trapped at the war's start. It was a year and a half before she returned to find her manuscript book and its pages "so browned and scorched with the flames that they broke as you touched them; and there was nothing left but to destroy it." She lacked the strength to go back and rewrite; the current work was offered only as a small and regretful remembrance.

This whole story Cronwright later called a lie. There had been no research, he claimed, no analysis, no book, no consuming fire. No papers of consequence had been left—had ever been left—at such a distance from where she was living. The house had indeed been looted, but at the time she had voiced regret at the loss of no more than a box of personal treasures: a lock of her father's hair and of her baby sister Ellie's, some old journals, and a sheaf of "Dreams." Moreover, "such a book would have meant hard, exact, systematic reading and study, and a collection and tabulation of exact scientific facts, a kind of labour she was incapable of." She constantly confused the terms "thought" and "work," Cronwright said. "She may have dwelt upon the thought of this imaginary sex book until, for her, it assumed objective form." She was, in short, a pathetic monster of self-deception.

In Cronwright's "The Life of Olive Schreiner" and in his edition of her letters, both published in 1924, four years after her death, the oppressed husband got his own back. These are jarringly nasty but seemingly rather honest books, their official fabric of adulation riddled by snorts of derisive laughter and indignation. Schreiner can no more than mention in a letter that she has been playing Chopin on the veranda but a bristling footnote will inform us, "She could not play, only strum simple tunes like a child." He catches her out in not having finished reading a book she claimed to admire; he reproduces the self-devised study schedule of her young governess days—Latin, French, mathematics—and declares that it is "worthless, except as her categorical setting down of what was proposed to be done, and then not doing it, a way she had almost to the last." The letters themselves—a few hundred chosen from over six thousand—were "a justification for postponing her more arduous literary work."

Schreiner sailed for England and Italy in 1913, seeking help for a heart condition that now barely allowed her the strength to move. She didn't have the money for the trip and tried to barter a manuscript to manage it, but finally allowed Cronwright to pay her way. (When she allowed him to assist her like this, he relates, "she said playfully she was becoming a 'parasite.' ") They were separated for the next six years. She was in Germany, taking the waters, at the outbreak of the Great War and succeeded in making it back to London. There she remained for the duration, a staunch pacifist who could hardly get a room in a boarding house because of her German name. She broke with most of the suffragist movement for its fervent support of the war, and argued with Gandhi about his recruiting an Indian ambulance troop for Britain. Poor as she was, she refused to allow a film to be made of "African Farm": "The tragedy of Lyndall and Waldo can't be put into a picture because it is purely intellectual and spiritual."

She and Cronwright wrote to each other constantly. In June, 1920—she was still in London—he said in reply to one of her letters, "When you write like that, my heart is water. . . . I love,

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revere and reverence you, and have loved, revered and reverenced you, as I have never done anyone else." He arrived in London the following month to be with her; he later said that he barely recognized the old lady who greeted him. Olive Schreiner sailed back to South Africa in August. She spent her last days in a boarding house in a Cape Town suburb, soliciting money for the defense of an African National Congress strike organizer, and hoping to become strong enough to go out to the karroo one more time, or to find someone to take her there. She died in December. She was sixty-five years old; an autopsy—she had requested one, as an aid to future sufferers—revealed blocked coronary arteries, accounting for her continuous anginal pain. Her lungs showed one long-healed scar, very small, and were enlarged with emphysema. There was no attending minister at the funeral held a few days later, and the ceremony was carried out in complete silence, to prevent any of the religious sentiments so common at gravesides from being spoken.

BY the time Virginia Woolf reviewed Cronwright's edition of Schreiner's letters, in 1925, Schreiner was a "rather distant and unfamiliar figure," despite having so nearly become, as Woolf noted, "the equal of our greatest novelists." Withal, she had failed: she remained "one half of a great writer." In the year of "Mrs. Dalloway," with its teasing nod to "women's rights (that antediluvian topic)," Woolf complained of Schreiner's unrelenting obsession with "questions affecting women." Four years later, Woolf wrote "A Room of One's Own," and feminist critics have pointed out an important link with Schreiner's second novel, "From Man to Man," the unfinished labor of more than a quarter-century, finally published just two years before Woolf's famous essay. Begun on the day she finished reading Darwin's "Descent of Man," in 1873, Schreiner's thwarted tale of sisterhood centers on a female counterproposal to the theory of natural selection: survival as the result of self-sacrificing mother love. Woolf's all-important room belonged first to Schreiner's theorizing heroine Rebekah, who brought it into being "by cutting off the end of the children's bedroom with a partition." Used as a study, and filled with Rebekah's manuscripts and books, her scientific collections and her microscope, it was the only room in the house kept locked.

Virginia Woolf assumed that Schreiner's work would disappear, and for many years, outside South Africa, it did. In her homeland, there have always been champions, perhaps because there have always been those who were given "African Farm" to read when young. Both Doris Lessing and Nadine Gordimer have written about Schreiner with great feeling; Lessing has acclaimed "African Farm" as one of the small number of books existing "on a frontier of the human mind," in company with "Moby Dick," "Jude the Obscure," and "Wuthering Heights." Both authors may trace their descent from Schreiner's example, not only in the literary depiction of a real South Africa but in a fiction of large ideas and political reverberations. Isak Dinesen read "African Farm" at the age of fifteen, before she had any idea of a life in Africa, and, although the viridian-lush hills and polished leaves of Dinesen's East Africa bear little resemblance to Schreiner's arid Biblical testing grounds, Dinesen wrote of remembering and recognizing, years later, the "high, incessantly varying" African air and wide sky as Schreiner had promised them, and of recognizing, too, Schreiner's perception of the land's essential tragedy.

Schreiner has a new audience today—responsible for a considerable revival in her fortunes—among English and American literary feminists: Lyndall's children. It was Tillie Olsen's melancholy "Silences," of 1965, a book about books unwritten, that first restored Schreiner to sympathetic attention and entered her name on a list of women writers ominously titled "Not Suicides," with the implication of Not Quite. Then, in 1977, Elaine Showalter's ground-breaking "A Literature of Their Own" seemed to fire a starting pistol by declaring Lyndall "the first wholly serious feminist heroine in the English novel." That year, Cassandra Editions reissued all of Schreiner's major fiction, including "African Farm" and "From Man to Man" and a collection called "Dream Life and Real Life"; a year later, the Virago Press gave "Woman and Labour" its first reprinting since 1911. From there, it was a short step to "An Olive Schreiner Reader," published by

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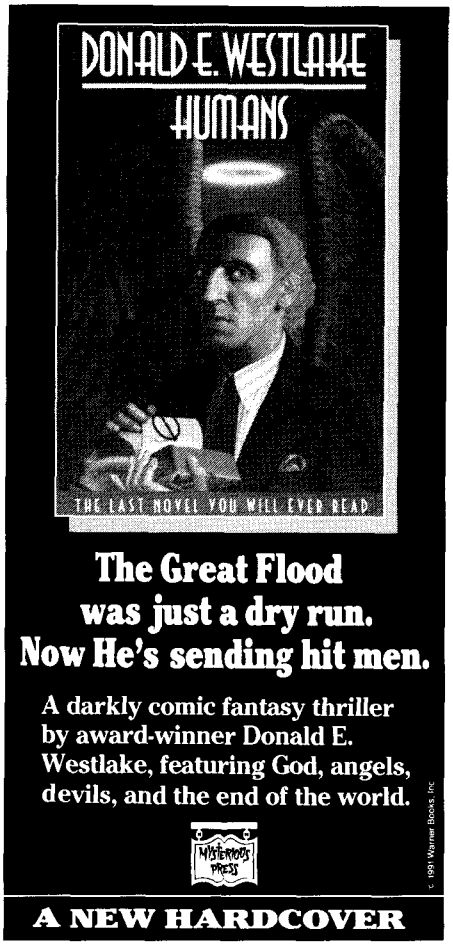

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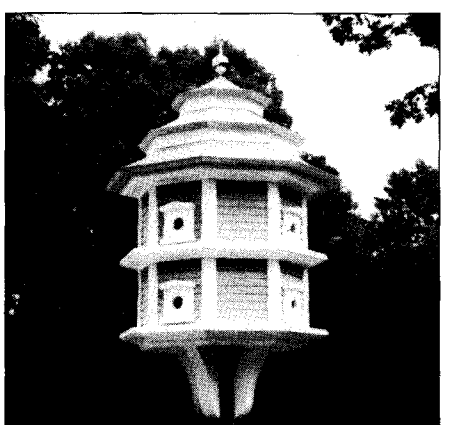

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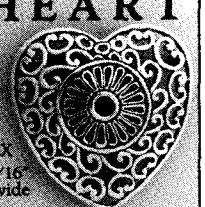

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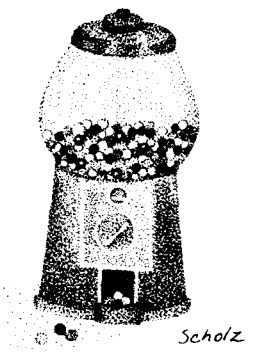
Pandora in 1987 with a dedication to Winnie Mandela, and to a rapidly accumulating bibliography. Olive Schreiner was being turned from an author into a heroine.

Even so, it was as difficult for some modern feminists to forgive Schreiner for defrauded expectations as it had been for Cronwright. Despite the historical importance that Showalter bestowed, she declared Schreiner's two novels "depressing and claustrophobic." Schreiner was "sadly underambitious"; her heroines "give up too easily and too soon." The problem with taking Lyndall as a feminist rallying point had been pointed out as far back as the Fellowship drawing rooms, where Schreiner's friend Elizabeth Cobb remarked skeptically that people wanted to be "helped to move, not to lie down and die." But Schreiner could as easily have allowed Lyndall to sail off into a bright future as have married her off at the publisher's request; it would have falsified all she knew. There was no future imaginable, yet, for Lyndall or for Waldo.



And as for that God-lusting boy, Schreiner's other half, so nearly forgotten in the current reconsideration, it is disconcerting to find the shrewd and fluent Showalter writing that Waldo, at the last, "becomes an intellectual, and finds peace in transcendentalism," ignoring the fact that what he actually does is die. Schreiner tried to be subtle, but her meaning is clear, and references to Waldo's death recur in the letters. This curious omission allows Showalter to impose a theme on Schreiner's book: woman's suffering leads to man's redemption. Schreiner's contemporaries knew better; in her little book "as sad as life," no one is redeemed.

Schreiner's life and its implications have been written and readjusted many times. Cronwright's biography and his edition of the letters enraged her admirers from the start. Vera Buchanan-Gould's "Not Without Honor: The Life and Writing of Olive Schreiner," the first full-length portrait to follow his, in 1949, shot back with statements such as "Like most men he was inclined to be impatient and unsympathetic with continual suffering." In 1980, several subsequent partial and amateur articles and books—Schreiner as martyr, Schreiner as latent homosexual, and so on—were swept aside by the publication of Ruth First and Ann Scott's measured and scholarly "Olive Schreiner," recently reissued (Rutgers; $40). Ruth First was a South African anti-apartheid activist, assassinated in 1982, and Ann Scott is a British critic. Their collaboration benefits most from a finely detailed presentation of the social and political background of Schreiner's English experience and, particularly, of the struggling colonial Africa of her youth and middle age. The book is packed with information, most of it judiciously set forth. But the authors present Schreiner herself largely as a social and political figure, distorting the relative importance of her accomplishments. They demonstrate far less interest in the novel that is, after all, the reason Schreiner's thoughts and positions were solicited throughout her life. Glossing over elements of the story of "African Farm" as Showalter does, they misrepresent its intentions just about as thoroughly. Waldo's beating in the fuel house is missing from their retelling, and they seem rather flustered by Showalter's conclusion about his fate. "He falls asleep in the sun. Or does he die?" they ask. Moreover, much of Schreiner's book is distorted through political strong-arming, to accord with the authors' avowed intention of placing her in a "Marxist-feminist framework." The rascally Blenkins' tall tale of a fortune lost at sea, which he uses as an excuse for his tattered appearance on arrival at the farm—an excuse that Lyndall sees through immediately—is accepted by First and Scott at face value, so that his bumptious schemes can be associated with "the entrepreneurial ideology of an emergent capitalism."

Olive Schreiner's feelings about native Africans—not her official late-in-life position but her frequently and publicly expressed feelings of condescension and aversion—offer a problem to anyone seeking to award her a medal for human or political enlightenment. Her most highly lauded political pamphlet, written in 1899 in advocacy of a democratic and integrated national union, offered as rea-

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soning "The dark man is the child the gods have given us in South Africa for our curse or our blessing." It is not surprising that Schreiner has been denounced in some quarters as a "racist feminist." First and Scott, sensibly aware of the climate in which she matured and the traps of moral hindsight, state simply that Schreiner was "firmly rooted in the racist stereotypes of contemporary ethnology which she was clearly unable to transcend." In their discussion of "African Farm," however, the absence of native Africans as anything more than specks on the landscape or briefly glimpsed and unattractive intruders is transformed into "the point about the colonial condition: Africans were kept so far outside white society that that in itself was a statement about it." Likewise, the brutishness of Bonaparte Blenkins and Tant' Sannie is but the effect of a colonial society that "internalized the violence" used against the indigenous population. Finally, the novel itself offers "a statement about the violence of colonialism." Yet just a few pages after this First and Scott quote Schreiner as arguing that Lyndall's death was "meant to show the struggle of helpless human nature against the great forces of the universe." The arbitrary cruelty and misery that Schreiner saw and recorded have their roots deeper than any strict political reading, Marxist or other, will allow.

Cronwright is as much of a villain in the new biographies as in the old, and the terms haven't changed much. First and Scott find him "insensitive to her struggles for expression either as a woman or as a writer." They believe him to be wrong or lying about the nonexistence of Schreiner's big "sex book," yet their accusation of "literalism over the manuscript" makes them seem as confused about the difference between thought and writing as Cronwright claimed Schreiner to have been, particularly when they add that he was "unsympathetic to her discontinuous, almost passive way of working." This way of "working," if that is what it was, cost Schreiner dearly, and her biographers' words condone the methods most derided by the woman who finally accomplished Schreiner's goal. "Woman is ready enough to play at working," Simone de Beauvoir warned in 1952, "but she does not work; believing in the magic virtues of passivity, she confuses incantations and acts, symbolic gestures and effective behavior."

Olive Schreiner saw herself, toward the end of her life, as equally important—as an example—in failure and in success. She knew that she suffered the ills and dissatisfactions of a "transitory condition," her own and her society's, and she consoled herself with Browning's "What I aspired to be and was not, comforts me." Her introduction to "Woman and Labour," which she addressed to future generations, concludes:

> You will look back at us with astonishment! You will wonder at passionate struggles that accomplished so little; at the, to you, obvious paths to attain our ends which we did not take; at the intolerable evils before which it will seem to you we sat down passive; at the great truths staring us in the face, which we failed to see; at the truths we grasped at, but could never quite get our fingers round. You will marvel at the labor that ended in so little;—but, what you will never know is how it was thinking of you and for you, that we struggled as we did and accomplished the little which we have done; that it was in the thought of your larger realisation and fuller life, that we found consolation for the futilities of our own.

Schreiner's resuscitation at the hands of the Women's Studies Departments may not qualify as a second life of art, but it is a kind of sweet revenge. She who complained of not having had sixpence spent on her education found herself in tears at her nephew's university graduation, with its "great crowd of girls in their caps and gowns sitting among the boys." Her last testament included the request that if enough money should remain in her estate after a sum was given over to Cronwright it should be used to found a scholarship for women at the South African College, Cape Town. To be called "The Cron Scholarship," the bequest would be available to women of all races and religions, with preference given to the poor. Cronwright concludes his account of Schreiner's life with the information that her estate was in fact financially negligible, and that he therefore took it upon himself to establish this educational trust. Spending only his own hard-earned money, as he reminds us, he fulfilled her proposal to the letter, departing from it only in the small matter of a title. Schreiner's fondest last wish and contribution to womankind was commemorated as "The Olive Schreiner Scholarship: Founded by her Husband."

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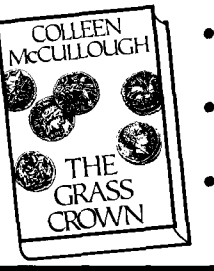

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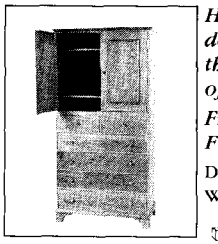

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FICTION

THE GOLD BUG VARIATIONS, by Richard Powers (Morrow; $25). Exhausting, encyclopedic, and overdetermined, this tome of a third novel is an ambitious exploration of DNA research, computer programming, human procreation, and the cosmic significance of Bach—especially the 1955 Glenn Gould recording of the "Goldberg Variations." The book matches two love affairs—one a brilliant geneticist's grand passion for a married female colleague at a Midwestern university in 1957, the other involving a dilettante art historian and computer programmer who is in love with the novel's chief narrator, a Brooklyn research librarian, in 1983—and presents the alternating stories as a fateful narrative double helix that bridges two generations. Great stretches of scientific and musical exegesis, some of it quite stirring, appear alongside the plot's intricate weaving of flashbacks and flash-forwards. A prolix glibness is the novel's weakness—virtually every character is a polymath of the sort who memorizes reference books and completes crossword puzzles in ink—and although the author tries to leaven his very large themes with humor and playful coincidence, the result seems in the end more like fatal cuteness.

GOODNESS, by Tim Parks (Grove Weidenfeld; $18.95). Mr. Parks' new novel, while lacking the hilarity of "Family Planning," maintains its own grim humor, as its opening lines suggest: "My father was a missionary murdered in Burundi in 1956. It was very much his own fault." George Crawley, the narrator, is a successful software expert in London, who, through careful and sustained effort, has left the horrors of his dreary lower-middle-class childhood behind him, and embraced the zealous pragmatism of Thatcher's Britain. But his severely handicapped and retarded baby daughter, Hilary, was definitely not part of his design: whose fault, exactly, is *she*, and what should be done about her? As George becomes tempted by increasingly ugly solutions to his domestic trials, the reader nevertheless finds it difficult to give up on him, and it is this—along with the novel's complex and unpredictable ending—that gives the author's latest meditation on goodness its bite.

EVE'S TATTOO, by Emily Prager (Random House; $19). Eve is a member of what once would have been called the smart set; she lives in a Manhattan loft done à la Chinoise, with a sexy French boyfriend. To her surprise, however, he is turned off when she has an Auschwitz victim's number tattooed on her American Wasp arm. Undeterred, Eve expresses her intention of keeping the victim's memory alive by making up stories of Eva Hofler, a Hitler supporter who becomes a fugitive when she discovers her Jewish ancestry, or of Eva Berg, an Aryan gynecologist who disobeys Nazi law, or of Eva Marks—and so on. Each story illuminates a different paradox inherent in Nazi ideology, a different double bind and cruelty. The stories intersect at no point with Eve's except for the fact that she recounts them at cocktail parties, or to a nun, or to anyone else who will listen, all the while insisting on her own lack of frivolousness. The reader's perception may differ. Ms. Prager is amusingly facetious in satirizing sophisticated New Yorkers, and she is a good storyteller; the flip side is a thin sentimentality when she tries to deal with the novelist's essential business of love.

GENERAL

THE DESTRUCTIVE WAR: WILLIAM TECUMSEH SHERMAN, STONEWALL JACKSON, AND THE AMERICANS, by Charles Royster (Knopf; $30). Mr. Royster's fine book sets out to answer a deceptively simple question: Why was the Civil War so bloody? His concern is not with the technological changes that made fighting more deadly but with the attitudes that countenanced the carnage. He opens with a vivid account of Sherman's sack of Columbia, South Carolina, in 1865, and then traces Sherman's career and that of the South's most feared general, Stonewall Jackson, seeking explanations for the war's crescendo of violence. He shows how one side's excesses could provoke even harsher retaliation and then be magnified by press accounts in a spiralling process that led soldiers and civilians on both sides to embrace savagery as a necessary part of the war effort. Mr. Royster is wisely content to allow the complexities of his subject to emerge from the stories he tells, enlisting the reader in his attempt to comprehend the war.

THE MAN TO SEE: EDWARD BENNETT WILLIAMS, THE ULTIMATE INSIDER; LEGENDARY TRIAL LAWYER, by Evan Thomas (Simon & Schuster; $27.50). Edward Bennett Williams, who died in 1988, has a secure place in history for arguments that persuaded the Supreme Court to reconsider its Olmstead decision and, eventually, to apply Fourth Amendment protections to wiretapping. To most Americans, though, Williams was notorious as a defense attorney for rich people in trouble, and as an owner of the Washington Redskins and the Baltimore Orioles. This high visibility obscured the complexness of his personality and, perhaps, the nature of his talents, which included a keen mind and a capacity for obsessive preparation. Mr. Thomas's welcome study is an accomplished portrait, and the background—the quaintly macho world of Washington from Roosevelt through Reagan—is very well done, too.

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THE MYSTERIOUS (BUT AUTHORITARIAN) EAST

[*From the label on a "French terry pullover" made in China*]

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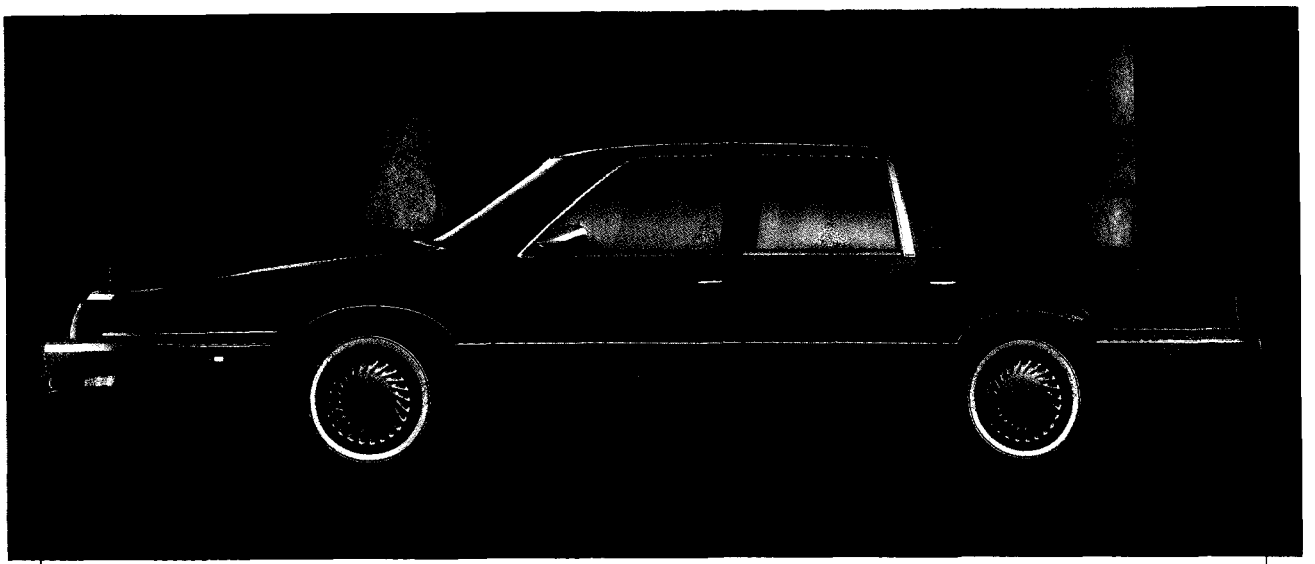

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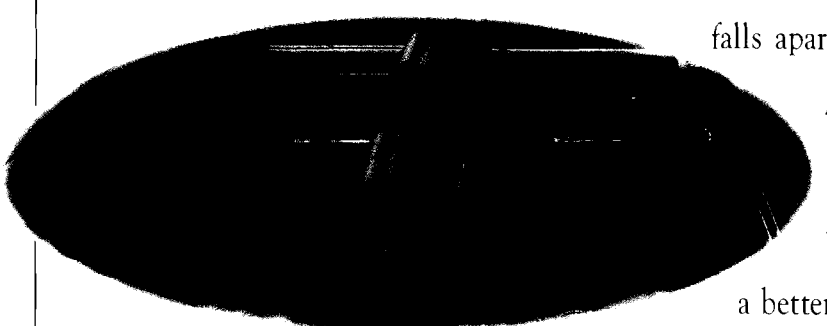

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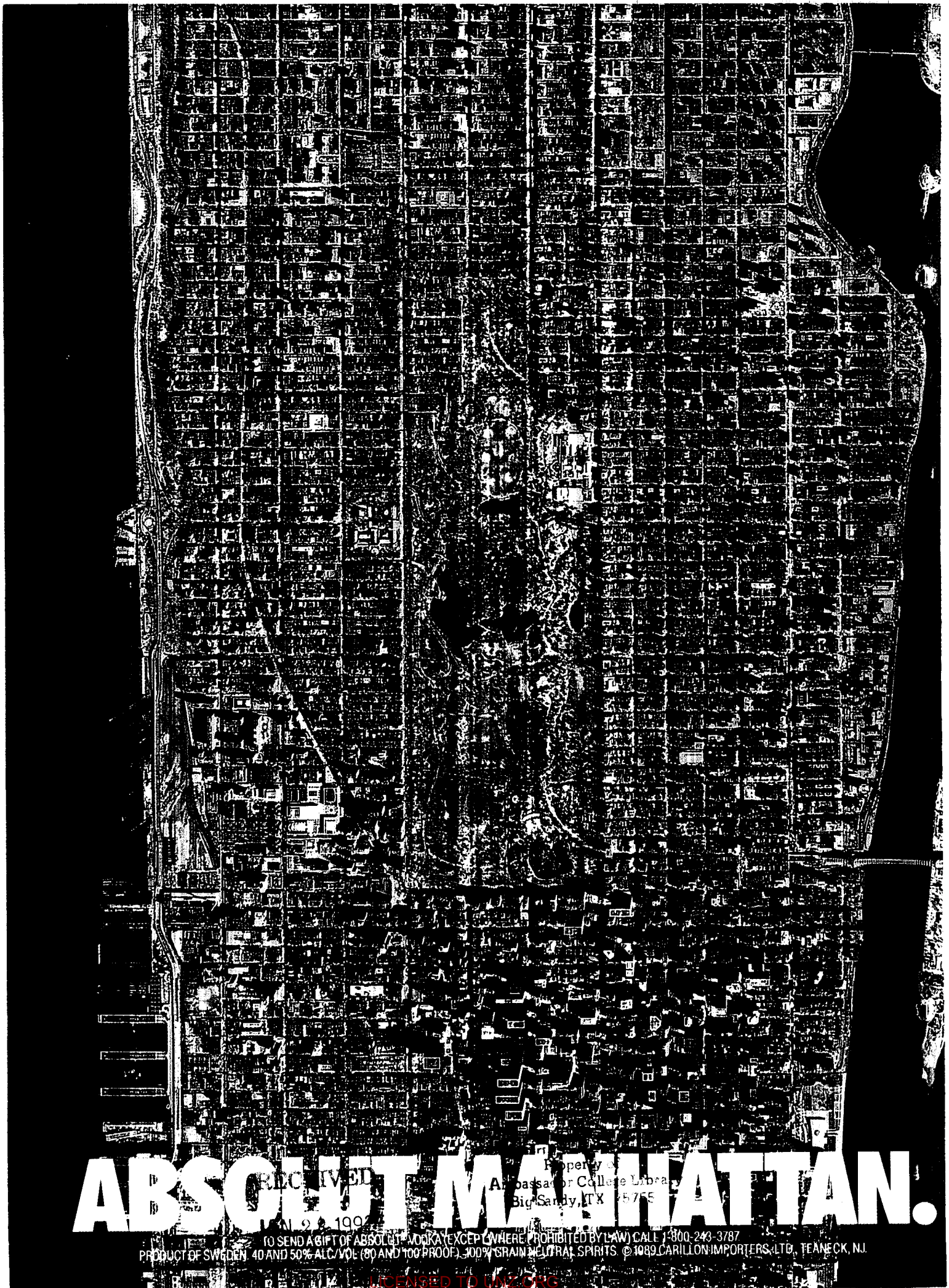
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